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A D R I A N

OR THE

CLOUDS OF THE MIND.

A Romance.

BY

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AND

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“—an unceasing strife
Of shadows, like the restless clouds that haunt
The gap of some cleft mountain—”

SHELLEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

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ADRIAN;

OR,

THE CLOUDS OF THE MIND.

CHAPTER I.

And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue.

SHAKSPEARE. "*Hamlet.*"

THERE was a dead silence. The two friends fixed their eyes upon the window, till the light began to fade away; and then Charles Selden laid his hand upon Adrian's arm, grasping it firmly, and whispering in his ear, "Have you arms in the house, Adrian?"

"None but my gun," replied his friend.

"Why?"

“Because these are very substantial spirits indeed,” answered Charles Selden ; “and we must find out what all this means—Quick, get the gun, if you will go with me. I have got a stick and a knife, which will do well enough ; and I will hunt them down, if I die for it. — Make haste, make haste ; they are evidently going.”

Adrian sprang to the door, and ran up to his bed-chamber, where the gun stood charged.

Charles Selden was after him in a moment, saying quietly, “Which is the way up ?” and raising the lantern which his friend had set down on the floor.

“On my life, I don’t know,” replied Adrian. “Stay, here is a staircase at the end of this passage. It must lead somewhere.”

“Assuredly,” replied Charles Selden,

dryly ; and hurrying on together, they came to the foot of one of those rickety staircases mentioned in the first chapter of this true history. Adrian sprang up first, cocking the gun as he went, and expecting undoubtedly to find a bright light, and a large party, either spiritual or temporal, assembled above.

No light was there, and nothing of any kind to be seen, though they were now close to the very window where the figures had been apparent a moment before. But, as Adrian was in the act of saying, “This is very strange,” the sound of steps, seemingly running down a distant staircase, caught the ear of both.

“ Hark !” cried Charles Selden, “ after them, after them !” and on they ran together, guided by the noise.

At the end of the long, wide corridor,

they came suddenly to the head of a small staircase, turning off to the left ; and Selden instantly pushed past his companion, hurrying down, and carrying the lantern. A small landing-place was found at the bottom of the first twelve steps ; and there, the voice of worthy Master Palham, the gardener, was heard exclaiming, in a dolorous and sleepy tone, “ What’s the matter ? What’s the matter ?—It’s only the rats, sir.”

Charles Selden, who never swore when he was cool, gave the speaker a profane benediction, without turning to look where he was, but recognizing the voice and not liking it, and still hearing steps running on before. Down the continuation of the stairs he went, with Adrian close at his heels ; and in a moment or two after, they were in the great, tall, well-smoked kitchen, with the wide-open jaws of the enormous fire-place

gaping at them just opposite. A door, opening into the little court-yard behind, moved slowly to, as they entered, leading them to believe that somebody who had just passed, had only paused to give it one pull after issuing forth. The two young men rushed at it together, and threw it wide open ; but the court-yard was in deep shadow ; the risen moon, somewhat cloudy and obscure, was casting all the light she gave on the other side of the house, and a low wall, on the top of a slight rise, ran along at the distance of some forty or fifty yards. Adrian and Charles Selden both paused, and looked hurriedly around ; but nothing was to be seen.

“ Put out the lantern, Charles ! Put out the lantern ! ” said Adrian. “ It only confuses us.”

Selden, however, instead of putting it out,

placed it behind the kitchen door, in doing which he was raised a couple of steps above his companion, and the moment he turned round again, he exclaimed, "There's a head. There's a head, beyond the wall—two men running down the slope, on my life!"

Away went Adrian again. Away went Charles Selden—up to the wall, and over it in a moment.

"Hang it, take care of the gun," said Charles, "it was right at my head—There they go—there they go. We are well matched, two to two. Now for a race. They have got a good start; but we know something of foot-work."

"And thanks to my rambles, I know every step of the wood," answered Adrian, still running on.

The two persons whom they were pursuing were now clearly enough to be seen,

by the half-shaded moonlight, directing their steps straight forward, and as fast as they could go, towards that spot in the bottom of the valley, where the little cart-road, by the side of the stream, entered the dark pine-wood of which mention has been made.

“We shall lose them amongst the trees,” said Selden, with a sigh, keeping up close to Adrian.

“No, no,” replied his friend. “The rocks are straight up, upon their left, and the river thirty foot down, on their right. If they jump, they will break their necks. If they climb, we shall catch them.”

The words were hardly spoken, ere the men had reached the road, and plunged into the wood. Adrian and Charles followed like lightning; but in the wood all was darkness around. A momentary pause brought the sounds of rapid feet, beating

the road, to their ears, and on they rushed, giving the same indications of pursuit to those they followed. For about three quarters of a mile, the chase continued in solemn darkness, and with no slight risk ; for the road was not the best in the world, and there were occasional gaps and fissures extending from gulleys amongst the pines, across the path, near which, one false step might have precipitated either pursuers or pursued into the deep below.

At length the limit of the wood was reached ; the gorge spread out wider ; small scrubby trees and seedlings succeeded the tall gloomy trees ; the stream took a leap over the rock ; and the path was again clearly to be seen, descending the hill-side more rapidly than ever towards a wide extent of even ground, which lay between the foot of the acclivity and the sandy shores of that

remarkable bay, by which so many an event had occurred affecting the thoughts, and feelings, and destiny of Adrian Brewerton. The two figures were still before them, with the moon shining clear and bright, denuded of her vapoury veil. They seemed no nearer than before, however, and Adrian and Charles Selden put forth all their speed. But the parties were very equally matched; and for the next mile very little was gained by the pursuers. Then, indeed, the two other men seemed somewhat beaten. The distance diminished slightly; and Adrian said, in a panting voice, "We shall catch them or drive them into the sea. The stream grows deep and wide near the mouth. I remember it well."

"They may take to the left and along the sand," said Charles Selden, "or into the alder bushes among the swamps and ditches."

“We can cut them off,” answered Adrian.

While this was spoken, both parties still continued running on at furious speed; and the race continued uninterrupted for more than half a mile further. At the end of that distance, however, two other men were seen to start up, as if from the edge of the sands, where a green, rushy ground bounded them on the left. Spreading out a little, they took direct steps towards the road, as if to join the two fugitives; and Charles Selden exclaimed, “Odds against us! Never mind, I’m good for two.”

But to the surprise of both the pursuers the two men whom they were chasing, instead of making for the others or pausing for reinforcement, suddenly turned from the road, in a diagonal line to the right, towards some osiers which fringed the stream.

Without noticing farther the two new

comers, who were now approaching rapidly, Adrian and Charles still followed their object, keeping an eager eye upon the osiers, which were somewhat thick, and calculating, without speaking, whether the men they were pursuing would attempt to swim the stream, or to slip from them under the cover of the trees. The other party of two, however, cutting across at a sharp angle, were now very near, and Adrian, not liking to be taken between two fires, exclaimed, "Who are you? —Keep off;" and at the same time, he raised his gun towards his shoulder.

"Is that you, Mr. Brewerton?" said a voice which Adrian thought he had heard before. "Are you hunting those two fellows? James and I were on the look out for them too. We'll catch them soon, for we've cut them off from their boat.—This way, this way, sir,—they've crossed by the over-go, up there."

“They struck the river just here, Herring,” replied Adrian.

“Ay, but they ran up under the trees, sir—I saw them,” said the fisherman. “We’ll have them. They can’t escape.”

Few words were enough for Adrian Brewerton. Herring, as he spoke, ran forward. The young man, James, came a little more slowly. The two fellow Collegians sprang forward together; and all four were in a moment by the side of the river, at a spot where a fallen willow tree formed across the stream a sort of natural bridge, which Adrian had never observed, although it had been already trodden by many feet.

“Spread out, spread out,” cried Herring, who now took the lead, “and we shall turn them, whichever way they take. Keep off the swamp, Mr. Brewerton—not so far to the left, not so far to the left, or you’ll be up

to the neck. Hold fast by the firm ground.—James, don't let them get up the hill."

These directions were uttered under the impression that the men would naturally attempt to double as they went, in order to avoid being driven straight up to the fishermen's cottages, where their capture seemed certain.

To the surprise of all, however, they pursued their way straight forward, and after going somewhat more than a mile, slightly relaxed their speed, as if they felt themselves approaching a place of safety. It is true, some little diminution of exertion, as Adrian and Charles Selden felt, was absolutely necessary after so long a chase; and they, too, slackened their course for a time, while Adrian called to Herring, saying, "They are taking straight for the houses!"

"Strange enough, sir," replied the good

fisherman ; “but we shall net them there, whosoever they be. Do you know who they are ?”

“ Not at all,” shouted Adrian in reply. “ I only know that they got into my house to-night—thinking I was asleep; I suppose.”

“ Lucky you wern’t, or you’d have had your throat cut, most like,” answered Herring. “ They’re after no good; for they came off, at the darkest of the night, from that slaver-looking craft that’s been upon the coast for the last fortnight.—’Pon my life they’re making right for the houses, as if they were going to pay a visit. They are cool hands, but we’ll have them, I calculate.”

While this loud conversation was going on, the two fugitives had actually got upon the narrow, sandy neck of land, on which the fishermen’s cottages were built, and the

other party, now certain of being able to cut them off, proceeded more slowly—keeping a sharp eye upon them in the moonlight, however, lest they should get to the boats which were on the beach. They made no attempt to do so, but still running on in the clear moonlight, passed by Herring's own house, where they were lost for a moment in the shadow, and then emerging from the obscurity again, ran straight towards the better dwelling of old Israel Keelson, where they altogether disappeared.

“Well, this is strange!” exclaimed Herring. “What the deuce can they be going into old Keelson's for? If they be what he takes them to be, he'll knock the heads off them.”

The whole party paused and then walked on slowly; for the two they were in pursuit of were evidently now fairly housed. A mo-

ment after, however, there was a sound which made Adrian start. Then came a loud and terrible shriek ; and all four rushed forward at once towards Keelson's house.

CHAPTER II.

The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new light thro' chinks that time has made ;
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

WALLER.

LET us go back for an hour, and enter Keelson's cottage as it appeared in an earlier period of the night. All was quiet and still and peaceful. In the little front room sat the old man and his daughter : Ella's hands busily employed on an embroidery frame, in an occupation then waning into disuse, and which had generally been confined to

the higher classes, even when in vogue : the old man reading a large lettered book, but every now and then raising his head, and looking towards the window, or turning his ear toward the door, through which, however, no sounds came, but the quiet, even rush of the sea along the shore in a calm night. From time to time, Ella would look up to her father's face, and say some cheerful words, with eyes full of affection ; and old Keelson would answer gravely, but tenderly, and resume his reading again.

The door between the front and the back room was partly open, beyond which a light was seen ; and when the father and daughter were silent, besides the sound of the sea, the buzzing whirl of a spinning-wheel made itself heard from within, or occasionally, the voice of old Kitty, speaking a few broken sentences to herself, with a habit of

soliloquising, not at all infrequent in her race.

After a time, Keelson rose and began to pace the room with a slow step, and in an attitude very usual with him: his hands behind his back, and his eyes cast thoughtfully downwards.

“Have you been reading any thing sad, my father?” asked Ella, putting down her work. “The book seems to have made you grave.”

“Far from it, my dear child,” said the old man. “It is an old book, full of high hopes—some comments upon passages of Scripture, which refer to all that God has thought fit to reveal to us of after-life. Comments, perhaps, I should not have called them: they are but developments of the heavenly promises to him who faithfully serves his master.”

“ May I look at them ? ” asked Ella. “ I would fain see what they teach.”

“ Another time, my child,” said Keelson. “ The book is called ‘ Consolations for the Old.’ *You* have time enough, my Ella,” he added, with a smile. “ But I will tell you what honey it extracts from the flowers of God’s word. It tells us that we are the objects of his love, and says that love will be made perfect in heaven. It shows us that short partings here are followed by joyful re-unions hereafter. It shows us—Hark ! —did you not hear a sound ? ”

“ I heard something like a shot,” replied Ella ; “ some of the lads from the town, shooting wild fowl by the moonlight, I dare say.”

“ Not that,” answered Keelson, pausing and listening. “ The moon was cloudy some time ago. No one is out fowling so late.”

"It *is* very late," replied Ella. "I did not like to disturb you in your reading; but I think, by the candles, it must be near midnight."

"Past midnight, my child," said Keelson, looking at his watch; "but I am somewhat uneasy to-night. There are things going on that I do not understand. Herring and James have gone over to watch on the other side of the bay; and if it be as I suspect, information must be sent up to the town. I do not hear any farther sounds. Do you?"

"No, none at all," answered Ella, quickly. "Had we not better lock all the doors and go to bed?"

"Go you, my love," said Keelson. "I will just walk out to the Point, and see what is going on. I shall be back before you are asleep."

"Oh, do not meddle with them, my dear

father," exclaimed Ella, rising and throwing her arms around him. "Let them alone. If they be bad men, you have no authority to take them."

"Take whom?" said Keelson, with a smile. "Rest quiet, my love; rest quiet. I will not meddle with them at all; but if, as I suspect, they are running smuggled goods, I feel bound to send up information, as they thought fit to insult me, by giving me some hint of their intention—I will take no other part in the matter, however. The officers must settle all the rest. Go to bed, my child—I will be back directly."

"I would rather wait till your return," replied Ella, seating herself again, and taking up her work. "I could not sleep, if I were in bed at this moment."

"Well—well. I will not be long," answered Keelson; and taking down his hat, he opened the door and went out.

Ella remarked that he took no arms with him ; and she was pleased. When he was gone, she plied the busy needle for a minute or two, in deep thought ; but the sound of Kitty moving about in the next room attracted her attention, and she looked round.

“What are you doing, Kitty?” she asked, seeing the negro woman on her knees, bending down over an oaken coffer which stood in that chamber. “Taking care of de papers, as de ole man told me,” answered Kitty, stuffing something in her bosom. “All right, missy.”

“Come hither, Kitty,” said Ella, in a low and rather wavering voice. “What makes you so particularly careful of the papers to-night?”

“Don’t know, my dear,” answered Kitty ; “but I often see tings oder people don’t

see, and read signs oder people don't read. I don't like tings to-night—better de ole man stay at home."

" What have you seen to-night ?" asked Ella, not clearly comprehending whether the good woman spoke of some natural sight which she had beheld, and which had alarmed her, or whether she referred to an impression produced by supernatural powers of vision, to which Kitty, in common with many of her race, made some pretensions. " What have you seen to-night, Kitty, to alarm you ?" she repeated, as the woman hesitated to reply to her first question.

" Missy Ella," said Kitty, taking her hand, and speaking in a sad and solemn tone, " de settin sun hab blood on his face to-night ; but when he gone to roost, I heard de little birds chirping love, in de great elm tree ober de hill."

Superstition is a strange thing. Ella did not believe; and yet the evil auguries of the negress made her feel cold and fearful.

She plied her needle again in silence, keeping her ear watchful for every sound. A minute or two after, there was a step; but Ella knew that it was not her father's. She could not identify it with any that she had ever heard. The next moment, the outer door was opened, and a man, dressed in the clothing of a sailor of the better sort, looked into the room, saying, "Is Master Keelson at home to-night?—you sit up late, fair ladies;" and he laughed coarsely, as his eye fell upon the black woman.

Ella trembled; for her nerves were shaken, and she recognized the man against whom her father had warned her.

"He is not at home," she answered,

quietly ; “ but he is not far off, and will be back directly.”

“ Him only gone to neighbour’s cottage,” said Kitty, boldly telling the falsehood which even fear could not induce Ella to utter ; “ he be back in a minute wid de oder man.”

“ Well, then, I will sit down and wait for him,” said Captain Sparhawk, entering the room, and taking a chair uninvited. But he was no sooner down than he was up again, and advancing towards Ella’s embroidery frame, he said, “ That’s d—d pretty. You seem a smart stitcher, Miss.”

Ella rose instantly and drew back, with a look which had its effect even upon that coarse man.

“ There, you need not be frightened,” he said, “ I am not going to hurt you, or it

either ;" and walking back to his chair, he seated himself again.

Two or three minutes passed in painful silence ; and then Captain Sparhawk rose, and began whistling some tune of the times, turning his steps, as he did so, towards the window, and making a considerable noise with his feet. Nevertheless, Ella thought she heard a confused sound of other steps ; she could not distinguish whether they were her father's or not ; but they seemed to her to be in the little passage which led from the house-door. She looked enquiringly to Kitty ; but Kitty was seated silent and motionless, with her eyes bent down ; and before Sparhawk had well looked out of the window, he exclaimed in an over-loud tone, " I wonder what sort of a night it is going to be. The moon seems as if

she did not know what the devil to be about."

"Bad night for somebody," said Kitty, solemnly.

"Ha! what makes you say that?" cried Sparhawk. "I think I've seen you somewhere before, my beauty; though you weighed half a ton less, and were somewhat younger."

"Very like," said Kitty, unconscious of the evil she was bringing on herself. "I see you in Charleston, long ago. I know you quite well, and all about you, Massa Sparhawk."

"The devil you do!" cried he; "well, I shan't forget you either."

But at that moment a rapid step, which Ella well knew to be her father's, was heard crossing the little piece of ground before the house. She did not know whether to

be glad or sorry; but while her feelings and her thoughts were all in confusion, old Keelson entered the room, with a look which plainly showed he had heard a strange voice in his house, and had hurried his pace.

The moment Keelson's eye fell upon Sparhawk, a change came over his face. His forehead gathered into a heavy frown; his lip quivered evidently with anger; and the old man seemed to grow two or three inches taller. Without greeting or ceremony of any kind, he strode past the intruder at once, and placed himself beside his daughter. Then, wheeling suddenly round, he confronted Sparhawk, exclaiming, "Did I not tell you, never to come near this house again?"

"Perhaps you might," replied Sparhawk, in a cool tone. "But you know I was never famous for obeying any one's orders

but my own ;" and as he spoke, he advanced a step towards Keelson, getting between him and the mantel-piece, over which hung an old French musket, which Captain Sparhawk perhaps thought might prove dangerous in the hands of an angry man. When he had performed this evolution, he added, in a cajoling sort of tone, "Come, don't let us quarrel, my good sir ; I only came because business brought me, and business which you have no right to find fault with."

" You have taken a strange hour, sir," said Keelson, fixing his eyes steadily upon him.

" I have taken the only hour I could," replied Sparhawk ; " and if I had not found you waking, damn me, I should have knocked you up. However, Master Keelson, to come to business. A gentleman, whom

you know, has told me to ask you civilly to come with me at once to Charleston, and to bring some papers you once boasted of having, along with you. Things have changed in that part of the world within the last few months."

"I know they have," answered Keelson, gravely.

"Well, it may be to your advantage to come," said Sparhawk.

"That I shall certainly not do," answered Keelson ; "and now I must request you to go. I wish to close my house, and go to rest. You have my answer — I will not go to Charleston."

"Well, then, send the papers you talked of, by me," answered Sparhawk ; "I tell you it may be for your own good."

Keelson laughed aloud, exclaiming, "Do you think I am a fool, or that I do not

know you and your scoundrelly uncle too well?"

A dark, red glow came upon Sparhawk's forehead ; and he answered, in a menacing tone, "I tell you, you had better do one or the other quietly ; for the papers I am determined to have with me"—and he added after a momentary pause—"for proper examination."

"That you certainly shall not," said Keelson ; "and if you do not go at once, I will call the neighbours, and send you up to the town for proper examination."

"Your neighbours are all asleep," answered Sparhawk, with a laugh ; but even as he spoke, his words were proved to be not literally true ; for the door was pushed farther open, and a short, thin old man, poorly dressed, and walking with a sort of paralytic limp, entered the room.

“Do you know, Israel,” he exclaimed, with an excited countenance, and yet with a lack of expression which had something painful in it, “Do you know there are three men up your passage, quite in the dark corner at the end?”

“Villain!” cried Keelson, gazing at Sparhawk, “what are you going to do?”

“Run, Davie, run,” cried the voice of Kitty, almost at the same moment. “Call up all de neighbours. Be quick, Massa Davie, be quick!”

Before the poor old man could obey, however, Sparhawk had caught him by the arm with a powerful grasp of his left hand, and seeing Keelson advancing towards the musket, he drew a pistol from his breast, levelled it at him, and exclaimed, “Back!” The next instant he raised his voice, shouting aloud, “Come in, lads; come in;” and

three bad-looking fellows, in sailors' garb, rushed at once into the room.

"Keep that fool," cried Sparhawk, releasing Davie's arm. "Hark—who is coming? Oh, Jones and Petersen!" he added, as two other men, dressed much like the former, rushed breathless into the place.

Then advancing towards Keelson, with the pistol still in his hand, he said, in a bitter tone, "The papers, old idiot—the papers."

"Never," cried Keelson sternly.

"Then I will take them," cried Sparhawk in a voice of thunder, "and you, too, with them;" and he attempted to grasp Keelson's collar with his left hand.

Ella, who had remained trembling in silence, shrieked aloud, and old Keelson, dashing Sparhawk's hand aside, grappled him in his still powerful arms.

“Seize them all,” cried Sparhawk. “Seize them all; and aboard with them! Catch the nigger—catch the nigger, above all!”

While he spoke, he still struggled in old Keelson’s grasp; and one of the men who had last come in, called out something to him which he did not hear.

The moment after, however, a change came over affairs. A confused sound was heard from the passage, fresh faces appeared in the room. Adrian, Selden, and the two fishermen dashed in, and Charles caught one of the men by the collar, while Adrian rushed on to the aid of old Keelson, seeing him struggling with Sparhawk.

A scene, of which we can give no description, ensued. The face of Sparhawk became distorted with fury. “Take to your tools, and down with them, lads,” he cried aloud.

Each man grappled with another. One of the candles was knocked off the table, while the other remained burning calm and quietly in the midst of all the strife. Kitty was seized, and dragged towards the door : Ella crouched trembling in a corner. Pistols and cutlasses appeared in the hands of the sailors, and every thing was trouble, and confusion, and disarray.

Adrian endeavoured to make his way forward towards Keelson, but the poor foolish man, Davie, had fallen across the floor, and the young gentleman stumbled over him in his advance. No time was to be lost, indeed ; for Sparhawk had got his right hand free, and with the rage of a demon in his face, was pressing the muzzle of his pistol to Keelson's head.

Recovering himself, Adrian rapidly aimed the gun he carried at his friend's assailant,

and pulled the trigger ; but it flashed in the pan, and the young man rushed forward again, seizing the gun by the barrel, to use the but-end. The next instant, there was the report of a pistol ; Keelson relaxed his hold, staggered back, and fell, striking his head against a chair. Ella sprang forward, and knelt beside her father ; but as she gazed in his face, with a look of agony indescribable, Sparhawk seized her by the arm. A blow upon the head, however, from Adrian's gun, made him stagger back, glaring round him for an instant, like a wild beast disappointed of its prey.

“ Damn it, you have done for him, Captain !” cried a voice. “ We shall soon have more people upon us.”

“ Back—back to the boat,” Sparhawk shouted. “ Cut your way through ! One more, or less makes no difference. Down with them !”

Then came the struggle of Sparhawk and his men to escape from the dreadful scene in which they had been acting. Charles Selden and the rest opposed them vigorously ; but Adrian Brewerton was holding Ella's hand, by the side of her dead father ; and he saw but little of what followed.

When, for an instant, he looked round again, the cottage was clear. The sounds of rushing, and struggling, and curses, and exclamations, and one more pistol-shot, were heard from the beach ; but all the fierce faces had disappeared from the room, and Adrian and Ella were left alone with the dead.

CHAPTER III.

There is a kind of mournful eloquence
In thy dumb grief, which shames all clam'rous sorrow.
LEE. “*Theodosius.*”

ELLA wept not—spoke not—sobbed not. Her hand was clasped by Adrian Brewerton's, and she let it remain there ; but she looked not towards him. Her eyes were fixed upon her father—upon his face. She seemed to see nothing else, but that cold, pale, unanswering countenance—very likely she perceived not even the blackened wound on the right temple, or the slow, scanty, trickling stream of blood, that welled from

it to the floor. She asked no questions : she tried no means of remedy : she knew well enough that her father was dead, and that all effort was in vain. The sight seemed to have turned her into stone ; and her hand, as it rested in Adrian's, was as cold as marble. Every thought, every feeling was absorbed by the one object before her. There seemed nothing in the world for her but that.

It was a solemn time, and long the few moments that elapsed while she and Adrian remained there alone together. He hardly dared to speak to her ; but yet he repeated her name twice, saying, "Ella—Ella." She took no notice : her ear was pre-occupied as well as her eyes. The report of the pistol lingered in them still.

At length there was another step in the room—a halting, unequal step, but quick

and eager ; and poor Davie, the silly man, came up and stood beside Adrian, and Ella, and the dead. He, too, remained for a minute or two, gazing in silence ; but at length, as some others entered, the feelings of the poor old man's heart burst forth.

“ Ah, Israel Keelson—I^srael Keelson !” he said, while the large tears rolled over his face, “ have they taken thee away from us ? Thou wert a good man, and art gone to a good place. God help us who remain ! Who shall take care of the orphan and the widow, now ? Who shall be kind to all who are in trouble or distress ? Who shall have a comfortable word for sorrow, and an open hand for poverty ? Who shall care for the poor old foolish man who cries beside thee ? ”

The spring of the heart's door was touched. The words of poor silly Davie were as

an electric chain of connection for Ella, between the utter isolation — the world apart, as it were, of sudden and intense grief, and all the things, sorrowful and dark as they were, of actual earthly life. Till then her spirit seemed to have left her body to mourn apart ; but now it rushed back again, recalled, to give itself up to human grief. She started up, gazed wildly round her, as if fresh awakened from a dream, and burst into a passionate fit of tears.

She seemed as if she was sinking ; and Adrian put his arm around her to support her. He trembled himself with manifold mixed emotions. Words were springing to his lips which his heart had been long burning to utter ; but it was a terrible hour—an awful moment—and he hesitated—he restrained himself.

The cottage was becoming thronged.

Neighbours and friends had poured in. The fishermen and Charles Selden had returned from vain pursuit, and the young man James stood in front, with his arms crossed upon his chest, and his teeth set hard, gazing upon Adrian and Ella.

At length she spoke. “ Oh, what shall I do?—what shall I do ? ” she cried. “ My father—oh, my poor father ! What shall I do ? ”

Adrian could refrain no longer. He drew her closer to him. He heeded not who was present, or who heard. “ Ella,” he said, “ dear Ella. Be my wife. God has taken from you your father ; but if you will, he has left you a husband who shares your grief, will join you in mourning, will strive to console you. Your father he can never restore ; but as much love as that father felt for you, as much tenderness and

kindness as he ever showed to you, as strong, as persevering affection, he can give—nay, he has given it long ago. Be mine, Ella, be mine, and let me share your sorrow. Give me a right to protect and guard you, and save you from all the agonizing things that have to follow. I have loved you long—I have loved you well—I will ever love you. Oh, listen to me, Ella. Be mine ; say you will be mine !”

She turned her beautiful eyes upon him, still welling forth bright drops, gazed through the tears into his face for a moment, then threw her arms round his neck, hid her face upon his shoulder, and wept there.

“ Where is the poor thing ?—where is my poor Ella ?” cried the voice of a woman rushing in, half-dressed, through the little crowd.

“ There, mother,” said Herring to his

wife, who was the new comer. "There is the poor dear girl ; but she has got help and comfort now. Mr. Brewerton offers to make her his wife."

"Ah, sir, that is kindly done," said good Mrs. Herring, holding out her hand to him.

Adrian pressed it warmly, whispering, "Take her away, Mistress Herring—take her away from this terrible scene. Leave me to settle all the rest. I will come to her soon."

"I had better take her to our place," said the fisherman's wife. "If she goes up stairs to her own room, she will be always hankering after the poor old man. Come with me, my dear child—come with me, and I'll be a mother to you. Jenny—Jenny ;" and as a girl of about twelve years old ran forward at her call, she added, putting her arms round Ella, "Take her other arm, Jenny, and help her along."

But Ella raised herself, and looked up. "I will come," she said—"wait one moment. I will come. I am calmer now." She then looked round to the spot where her father lay; and a terrible shudder passed over her whole frame. But with an unfaltering step, she approached the body, knelt down beside it, and pressed her lips upon the cold brow. Then raising her hands and eyes to heaven, she said, "Oh God, thy will be done, and thy name be glorified!"

"Come, come, my child," said Mistress Herring, aiding her to rise from her knees. "Indeed, Ella, you will be better away."

"I will go," said Ella, in a low tone. "I will go;" but ere she did so, she turned to Adrian, and laid her hand upon his arm, saying, with a look of earnest entreaty on her face, "Do not leave me long."

Oh, those words were very sweet ; and throwing his arms around her, he pressed his lips upon her cheek.

The young man, James, turned away with a deep sigh, and quitted the cottage.

In a minute after, Ella, and Mrs. Herring and her daughter, were gone also, and a short silence succeeded—one of those dead pauses—like a deep pool in a torrent, where the waters seem to collect themselves in profundity and stillness, for a fresh leap over the rocks—in which the mind seems to collect its strength and firmness, after a rapid current of terrible events, to follow them out to their consequences.

It was Charles Selden first spoke, and grasping Adrian's hand, he said, in a low tone, “ Nobly done—most nobly done, my friend !”

But Adrian's thoughts had by this time

taken another direction. “Have you caught none of the murderous villains?” he asked, gazing round the room. “They ought to be instantly pursued.”

“One is safe enough upon the beach,” replied Charles Selden. “Herring here, wrenched the pistol from his hand, and shot him through the heart.”

“Was it their leader?” asked Adrian eagerly. “Was it Keelson’s murderer?”

“No, no, sir,” replied Herring. “He got off—evil follow him! and as to further pursuit, just now, that is all useless. Their boat was all ready, a sharp-bowed, long-oared galley, and they’re aboard by this time.”

“But cannot a ship be sent after the schooner, from which, doubtless, they came?” asked Adrian.

“Oh, ay, sir. They came from her sure

enough," answered Herring; "but the ill-looking black slut wouldn't be overhauled in a hurry, even if there were a vessel of war here, which there is not. She goes like the wind, too, and we have nothing in the bay that could catch her. I've a great notion she's the Falcon, belonging to that Captain Sparhawk, we've all heard of, smuggler, slaver, pirate—devil, I believe; for nothing can catch him. He's been twice tried for his life, and contrived to get off."

Charles Selden was, at this time, kneeling by the body of old Keelson, examining with professional inquisitiveness the wound in his temple; but he looked up sternly, as Herring spoke, and said, with a flashing eye, "I'll catch him, sooner or later;" and laying his hand upon old Keelson's breast,

he said, "Old man, I promise you I will avenge you."

There was a good deal of talking now went on, discussion of the past, consultation as to the future. One of the young men undertook to go up at once to the town, and give information of all that had occurred, to the proper authorities. Adrian charged him also, to send him down an undertaker, and gave some other necessary directions, so that about half an hour was consumed before his thoughts could well turn to Ella again. The men who had congregated from the neighbouring houses, still remained in the cottage, joining in all that was said and done; but the women had dropped off, one by one, some returning straight to their own houses, some going down to look at the dead man upon the beach, and some proceeding to Mrs.

Herring's house, to offer assistance and consolation to Ella.

When Adrian looked round the room again, before he likewise sought her he loved, no woman was to be seen, and turning to one of the fishermen, he said, "Where is Kitty, the black woman? Has she gone down to her young mistress?"

The men looked in each other's faces in silence for a moment; and then Herring exclaimed aloud, "On my life and soul, that must have been her they threw into the boat, like a bale of goods. I have not seen her since. Have any of you?"

Every one answered, "No;" and Davie, who had been sitting in a chair, near the middle of the room, rubbing his right leg for well nigh half an hour, joined in, saying, "I heard a scream come out of the boat; and it was a black scream, too. I dare say

they pitched her into the water, when they got out far enough, or else have taken her away to make a nigger slave of her—Poor Kitty—she was a good sort of body—her soul I don't know much about—I wonder if it was black, too."

"Good God! can they have carried the poor creature off?" cried Adrian, in a tone of much anxiety.

"I fear so, Mr. Brewerton, indeed," replied Herring. "As I was struggling with the fellow whom I shot, and looking at that gentleman, who had just been knocked down by the captain, I saw two of the scoundrels tumble something like a great lump into the boat. It looked like a human creature, too; but it was dark-coloured, and I thought it must be some goods they had stolen, or something of that sort. I fancy, now, it must have been poor Kitty; for I

heard a scream, too ; and if it was, this will be a new grief to poor Miss Ella ; for she was very fond of the old woman, and the old woman of her. You had better come down to her, sir ; for I've a notion that you are the only person who can give her comfort, poor thing. We will set some one to watch here, with the body of poor Master Keelson ; and it doesn't want long of daylight now."

"I will stay with the body," said Charles Selden, "only I should like to have a pistol, if anybody has got one to spare. I have had one bad knock on the head to-night, and I should like to stop another before it falls."

"We have got no pistols, sir," answered Herring ; "for we're all peaceable people here. But here's an old gun which Keelson used always to keep charged. If he

could have got at it, I fancy there would have been another man dead, and he perhaps living, poor fellow.—Had we not better move him on to the bed?"

"No, no. Let him lie till the coroner comes," said Charles Selden; and after a few more words from various persons, the whole party except Charles moved towards the door, and Adrian, putting his arm through that of Herring, walked down with him to his cottage. He found Ella seated in the front room, with her head leaning on her hand; but her eyes now tearless. The moment Adrian appeared, however, she started up, and held out her arms towards him, as the only thing left her to cling to on earth. He pressed her warmly, tenderly, to his heart; and soon after, the women who were there, dispersed at a hint from Herring, and Adrian and Ella were

left together. She passed the whole of that night, till the gray morning dawn, with his arms around her, and her head leaning on his shoulder. From time to time, she wept; and from time to time, they talked; but no word of love was mentioned between them. It needed no mention, indeed. All was told that could be told, if not by words, in other ways; and Ella rested as confidently there, on her lover's bosom, as she could have done upon her father's.

The news of the fate of poor Kitty, which Adrian was obliged at length to tell her, grieved her sorely; but it was serviceable, as any event that interested her must have been, by withdrawing her thoughts for a moment from deeper grief. Sorrow is like an adverse army, weakened as soon as divided.

We need not pause on all that followed:

the coroner's inquests, the police investigations, the commotion in the town, the visits of the idle and the curious to the scene, the funeral, or the mourning. Kitty's place was supplied to Ella by a good girl, named Ruth, a distant orphan relation of the Herrings ; and poor Ella, with a lingering affection for the place, determined to return to her own cottage, till her marriage with Adrian Brewerton took place. For his part, he pressed eagerly to have that marriage solemnized as soon as possible. He represented to her, that in the circumstances in which they were placed, it was only proper and right, that they should be united without further delay. " All ceremonies, dear Ella," he said, " all ordinary rules, must give way before more powerful motives. We are both orphans, Ella. You are here alone, without a relation or a friend

to protect and guard you ; and I know that your father's spirit would bless a speedy union, which will insure you a home and a protector. I will speak to the minister, and I am sure no objection will be made."

She yielded readily to his arguments ; for in all things she was too true of heart to bind her actions down to forms.

The day was appointed, and the intervening space of time was occupied by the arrangement of old Keelson's affairs, with the aid of a lawyer. It was found that he had accumulated considerable property, for a man in his station, and it, with all the ready money which he had left, was placed by Adrian altogether at Ella's disposal.

In the coffer, in the back room, were found a number of old papers, of which neither Adrian nor Ella could make any thing. Adrian determined to preserve them,

however, though Ella judged they might as well be destroyed, saying, “ The papers that my father most valued were taken from that very place, Adrian, by poor Kitty, on that dreadful night when she was carried away. She seemed to have a sort of presentiment of what was coming, and thought to save them—Good God ! I can hardly think that it is now a month since then,” she continued, pressing her hands upon her eyes. “ Every thing seems so fearfully present.—Are you sure, dear Adrian, that there is nothing wrong in our marrying so soon ?”

“ If I were not sure, I would not ask you, dearest,” he answered. “ I have spoken to your minister, Ella, and he judges with me, strict as he is. The joy that is tempered with sorrow, Ella, is often the most durable.”

CHAPTER IV.

Thy father's poverty has made thee happy;
For though 'tis true this solitary life
Suits not with youth and beauty, O my child!
Yet 'tis the sweetest guardian to protect
Chaste names from court aspersions.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER. " *Laws of Candy.*"

IT was a Sabbath afternoon. The tolling of a church bell in the distant town, calling to evening worship, was the only sound that broke the stillness of the fisherman's bay. Softened and silvered by distance, the mournful monotony of tones, as they poured through the still air, was in perfect harmony with the repose of all animate and

inanimate nature. It seemed like the world's farewell to-day.

There is something in the music of distant bells, whether intended to speak the language of joy or sorrow, indescribably solemn. It is a sound, which, unlike all other sounds, except the continued falling of a great body of water, seems, as it were, self-caused, and detached from all immediate agencies of any kind. The swelling, and the dying away to swell again, and again to die, has something that accords so strangely with the full heart of man—something so powerful yet dimly suggestive of the great vague object of its deepest yearnings, that when listening to them, we seem to hear within us a melancholy echo of some great mystery. Nor is it at all from association that this peculiar effect arises. In the valleys of the Pyrenees, from the ruined con-

vents of Asia Minor, from the chiming towers of Belgian churches, from the venerable abbeys and cathedrals of England, we have listened to the solemn tolling of bells, with the same heart-controlling effect. How much is there in the feelings of all of us, which language can but faintly shadow forth to the intelligence, but which the heart appreciates, at once by harmonies of its own experience !

No sound was to be heard except that of the distant bell. Even in the country, and its most quiet nooks, there comes, once in the week, a Sabbath stillness palpably distinct from the languid repose of an ordinary summer's day : and so it was that evening. The fishermen's boats lay drawn up upon the sand, careened a little on one side, with their painted hulls as dry as if they had never known any other element than that on

which they rested. The bay lay glittering in front. Beyond stretched the broad Atlantic, smooth and motionless. All was still except when, through the calm air, swung the evening bell in mighty waves of sound.

In the parlour of the little cottage, where Adrian and Ella had first met, and where so many never-to-be-forgotten scenes of the life of both had been enacted, was assembled a small party, comprising Charles Selden, Herring the fisherman, and an evangelical clergyman from the neighbouring city. Poor Davie, the fool, too, was present. But he kept himself quite quiet ; and whether he came as an invited guest, or not, we cannot tell. For a time there was but little conversation going on, and that little was spoken in a low tone, not only because the parties, with the exception of Herring and Davie, knew little of each other, but

because all seemed to feel that the occasion, though naturally one of joy, had associations in the past too terrible to justify even reasonable cheerfulness. Mirth, as an attendant even of festive ceremonies, was by no means in accordance with the rigid notions of those days. Charles Selden was, perhaps, the gayest of the party ; but even his lively nature was very much subdued. They had not been assembled long, when Adrian Brewerton entered the room, his fine face glowing with a bright enthusiasm, without a doubt or hesitation shadowing his brow, and his appearance seemed to give some life to all who were expecting his coming. For the time he and Charles Selden appeared to have changed characters. Adrian was gay, sparkling, full of animation ; and there was something wonderfully softened and gentle in the tone of voice, and expression of coun-

tenance, with which the young physician greeted his friend. He held Adrian's hand for an instant in both of his, as if to make him feel, by that mute sign, a depth of regard and esteem, which he did not choose to express in words.

Adrian had a word of kindness for all—even for poor Davie, the fool. Not the kindness of condescension, which is always oppressive to the object, but that hearty fellowship which an expansive nature, in moments of great joy, holds out to all who seem in any way associated with its happiness.

The previous dullness of the little party was soon dispelled ; and they were in the midst of a conversation almost lively, when Ella entered from the room behind. She was still clad in the deep mourning which she had assumed after her father's death ; but as if to mingle the hues of joy and

sorrow, her dress displayed a little white about the neck and wrists. She was a good deal paler than when first we saw her, and her features, always refined and delicate, seemed even more spiritualized than they had been before her last great grief. Her eyes, too, seemed to have acquired a depth—a liquid light, which generally tells of strong emotions either of joy or sorrow. Yet there was a calmness and self-possession about her that might seem strange in a young girl so situated. A strong-hearted woman, however, whose fate circumstances have thrown into her own hands, although she may feel deeply, soon acquires that patient self-control, which, under similar circumstances, man in his fretful nature seldom attains.

With a slight, but kind acknowledgment of the presence of the rest, and a warmer greeting of Charles Selden, Ella walked

straight up to Adrian, giving him her hand, and thus silently intimating that she was ready for the ceremony to proceed.

The clergyman commenced with a long rambling prayer, having no particular application to the occasion, not in the very best taste, and strangely familiar in tone and language, considering that it was addressed to the Deity. People were then accustomed to this peculiar style ; and it probably did not grate so harshly upon the feelings of any of the persons present, as it would do upon ours. The hearts of Ella and Adrian were too full for them to criticise.

After the completion of the prayer, which could not have lasted much less than half an hour, the clergyman made an extemporeaneous adaptation to the occasion, of the Church of England form for the celebration of matrimony, which he certainly did not

much improve by his attempts to simplify it. He then pronounced Adrian and Ella man and wife, and closed with a short benediction, homely enough, but more in accordance with the occasion than his previous efforts had been. To the two lovers the minister had been but intermediary between themselves and God. They could not have felt more earnestly, had the fisherman's cottage been a vaulted cathedral, the Presbyterian clergyman a robed bishop, his simple benediction a burst of the highest eloquence. When the ceremony was concluded big tears stood in Ella's eyes—but none dropped.

Still holding Adrian's hand, she looked up in his face with such an expression of love and trust—a look of such confident appeal for affection and protection, that he could not refrain from an answer of some

kind, and he bent down to imprint a kiss upon her forehead, feeling, for the first time within his recollection, that perfect happiness without alloy, which comes to us in a gush not more than once or twice in a lifetime.

The few guests soon dispersed. Adrian pressed Charles Selden to join himself and Ella very soon at the old house over the hills, and to make them a long visit ; but the young physician excused himself on the plea of pressing engagements in town, and soon after mounted his horse and took his departure homeward.

The following morning no sumptuous breakfast awaited the bridal party,—no chaise and four,—no postillions, with favours in their hats, stood ready to conduct them on a wedding tour ; but Palham, the gardener, came over with the one-horse chaise to drive them to the dilapidated old mansion which was to be their home.

Adrian had prepared Ella for her new residence, by a dismal picture of its forlorn condition ; and, well understanding his motives, she smiled at the pains he took to put her out of conceit with it before she beheld it, although she felt almost surprised that he should judge such precautions necessary with her. It never, for a moment, entered her mind, that any one could think Adrian, in consequence of his superior station in life, had conferred any honour upon her by marrying her. She loved him too much to have room for such a thought —she judged too highly of love itself, to imagine such a thing possible. Loving him for himself alone, no extraneous circumstances could raise or depress him the least in her affection, and she wondered how he could for a moment think that any place where he was, could be aught but bright to her.

Ella's first impressions of the old house, with its dilapidated appendages, as far as could be judged from her manner and her words, were precisely such as her husband wished her to feel, though he had hardly dared to hope that they would be so favourable. From day to day she went on in her quiet, gentle, affectionate way, with no boisterous expressions of happiness, but showing Adrian, by a thousand little indications of a loving, cheerful spirit, that her heart was full of a serene, joyful affection, which left no place for the wild gusts of passion.—When Adrian felt disposed to read, she would sit by him and watch him with her tender eyes. When one of his fits of thought came upon him, and she fancied that he preferred to be alone, she would leave him—ready to return at the slightest signal of his desire for her presence.

So gentle was she, and yet so full of feeling, that had Adrian possessed the disposition of a tyrant, which was far, very far from being the case, he might easily have crushed that fair spirit, even by an unkind word. What, at first sight, might seem strange, she was fonder of talking to him of the past than of the future ; but the present was her future : her happiness was a happiness of realization, not of expectation : she could hope for nothing to be added to the cup which was already full. Indeed she had no ambition, except to merit the probation, and retain the affection of her husband. She looked upon Adrian, as the happiest children look upon their parents—as all that was excellent and perfect. His opinions were her opinions ; his will became instinctively her will. She identified herself with all his tastes ; she interested herself in all his pursuits.

Adrian Brewerton seemed worthy of such good fortune—so good, that we fear, in describing it, we may be accused by matter-of-fact readers of writing a romance. He thought that he had at last found a reality, which was far more than an equivalent for all the speculations upon reality and the definite, which at one time had engrossed his mind. His nature differed much from Ella's. Man as he was, it was far more impulsive. At times, he would look upon her until his eyes filled with tears of joy, and then he would clasp her to his bosom with a wild ecstasy that almost alarmed her. He had moments, too, when he would pour forth his love with an incoherent extravagance, more common, it is said, in lovers than in husbands; and Ella would endeavour to soothe him, as an affectionate mother might try to calm an impetuous

child. Adrian loved her but the better for her efforts to tranquillize him, knowing as he did, that hers was not the calmness which proceeds from coldness, and feeling every moment of his existence the purity, and even the fervour of her attachment. At times he would throw himself into a chair, and holding his head with his hands, would question himself as to whether he was really in a dream, or whether his happiness was indeed a substantial fact. But this was not often. His predominating feeling was that of joy—joy too real to be doubted. Nay more, many things which he had seen through a cloudy medium, seemed to be growing clear to him, as if the sunshine of felicity had dispelled the mists of fancy. The relations of man to life, he thought were beginning to present themselves to his mind, with a distinctness

and precision which he had often longed for. But still the clouds would come occasionally, and there were days when he felt that he had more to learn than experience had yet taught him—that he must patiently wait for the future to open to his eyes more than one sealed book.

Adrian's very variations of mood were all delightful to Ella ; for, through them all, there ran love and tenderness towards her ; and she could not imagine that any thing like pain, or grief, or even momentary annoyance, could spring from any trait in the character of her husband. But yet, she was unconsciously learning lessons of his disposition—lessons which, as it happened, she might have better been without. His extreme susceptibility became apparent to her—the subjection of his mind—nay, of his whole nature, to predominating in-

fluences, often hardly traceable to their sources ; and, without reasoning or argumentation upon the subject, she felt rather than thought, that Adrian's happiness or misery might be affected by causes which would be powerless with many men of inferior minds.

Still, this brought no cloud upon their happiness ; and the days passed by in various employments, gliding away with all the rapidity of joy's fast-fleeting footsteps. Occasionally the two would go over to the little cottage on the sea-shore, where she had once dwelt, now inhabited by the widow of one of the poor men who had been drowned in the terrible accident described by Ella to Adrian on the day of their first meeting. Sometimes they would sit with the poor widow, talking with her over past times ; and sometimes, going out

to the desolate shore, they would stand hand in hand, while Ella would even dwell, from time to time, on the dreadful scenes there enacted, with that calmness, which a high, simple faith in the great truths of religion can alone inspire ; and Adrian, on the contrary, would strive to draw her mind away to brighter, happier things, feeling, in the joy of his own destiny, that he would fain adopt the beautiful motto on the sun-dial, *Horas non numero, nisi serenas.*

CHAPTER V.

Et minimæ vires frangere quassa valent.

OVID. "*De Tristibus.*"

THEY were thus standing on the sea-shore—Ella and her husband—her lover still—and gazing over those bright deceitful waters, gently rippling in the evening sunshine of a calm, and lovely spring day. If there had been clouds in the sky, they were all dispersed by this time. The sun had not so far sunk as to change the complexion of the heavens by one rosy ray; and his beams spread over the whole expanse with a bright monotony, peaceful as

the dream of happy love. No part of the sky was actually blue ; for there was the faintest possible haze in the atmosphere, which would have given a silvery hue to the concave overhead, had it not been gilded by the beams of the declining orb —vapour, one could scarcely call it, that pervaded the air. It was but the softness, the tenderness of the year's youth ; and there they stood and gazed, and felt a harmony between the scene, and the season, and their own early years, and their own bright love ; and their hearts were full of happiness.

A step behind them !

The touch of misfortune is never effaced. Talk not to us of the joy being keener for the evil passed. Put a rough finger on a blooming grape, can you ever restore it that soft down which you take off—that witness

of its pure, untouched freshness? Can you ever give back to the heart which has been smitten by misfortune the blessed security of happier days?

There was a step upon the sands behind them ; and Ella started and looked round.

It was but poor Davie, the fool ; and she greeted the old man with a kindly smile. Adrian welcomed him, too, and shook hands with him, which pleased him a good deal. But still the poor man looked very rueful.

“ I come down to thank you, my good master and mistress—” (let the reader remember we are writing of times past,) “ for what you sent me ; but bless you both, money is no good to me. People enough will give me bread to eat ; and every now and then, they put a coat upon my back. I know not well where it comes from ; but I do know, it is different from the one I

had before. Money is no good to me," he repeated, with the common iteration of half-witted people. "It's comfort I want ; and where am I to look for comfort, since Israel Keelson is dead and gone ? I often stand and look out to windward, and think of him, and how he used to come sailing gallantly in, when first I knew him. I wonder who's to give me comfort now ?"

Ella's eyes filled with tears ; and she raised them, all glistening, to Adrian's face. She spoke not, but he read the look in a moment, and laying his hand on Davie's arm, he said, "We will try to give you comfort, my poor fellow, and never forget your love for one we loved. You shall come up and live with us, Davie, and we will try to make the rest of your years pass happily."

"Oh, how pleasant !" cried the poor

man ; “ and then I shall see her beautiful face every day, as I used to do. Since she has gone, the place has looked as if the candles were put out. When shall I go ? when shall I go ?”

“ To-morrow,” answered Adrian. “ If you like, I will come or send for you ; but we must get you a bed first, Davie. To-morrow I will send.”

“ Then I’ll go and pack up my bundle,” said Davie, rubbing his hands with delight. “ That will be pleasant ! ” and limping away, he left them.

Ella gazed tenderly in Adrian’s face ; and as soon as the man was out of earshot, she said, “ You have done this for my sake, Adrian. Are you sure you will never repent it ? ”

“ Oh no, love,” he answered. “ I am determined to get over all prejudices ; and

the sooner they are parted with the better. Poor Davie can have a nook in our home very well."

"But if any of your fine friends should come to visit you, Adrian," said Ella, "what would they think of your having a fool in the house?"

"They will not come, I think," said Adrian, with a sort of half sigh, he knew not why; but the moment after, he added, laughing, "But if they do, what matters it what they think of my having a fool in the house? Princes have had the same."

It was not exactly the answer which Ella had expected from Adrian Brewerton. There was something in the tone, too,—ay, and in the words themselves, which had a smack of pride in it; and she mentally repeated, "Princes have had the same!"

It was the first time she had ever re-

marked any thing like pride in Adrian ; and she did not wish her mind to rest upon it ; but it gave her a glimpse of his heart —not a perfect view, but a mere partial glimpse—and there was something that pained her. She would not let her thoughts dwell upon it. “No, no,” she said to herself, “that would be foolish—wrong.” But yet the memory remained. She caught herself thinking of it. She found it branching out in imagination, in many directions. She asked herself, “Why that half sigh, when she spoke of his fine friends ?” She remembered too, that on one night, never to be forgotten, he said he had *long* loved her. If so, why had he not told her so before ? Why had he remained so long away from her ? Why had he, his own master, not sought her hand during her father’s lifetime ? Had there been any prejudices to overcome in her case ? And

as the question suggested itself to her mind, Ella almost trembled. It was the first pain she had experienced since her marriage. It was the cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, that was soon to fill her sky with darkness.

No, no. She would not think of it. She would be gay—she would be cheerful. Was he not all that was kind, and good, and noble? Ay, and even if he had subdued prejudices for her, ought it not to raise him in her esteem? Ought it not fix him more firmly in her affection? Ought it not to show how great, how deep, how sincere was his love? Ought it to kindle the least feeling of regret—to mortify, to pain her in the smallest degree? Was she likewise proud—too proud to have a prejudice sacrificed for her, and not to thank her husband and his love for making it? No, no. She would think of it no more.

She would be gay. She would be happy. She would praise God for all the blessings he had given, and sweep away such shadowy clouds from her mind for ever.

She was successful to a certain degree. She returned with her husband cheerfully to their home. The light of her presence spread around, and Adrian, unconscious of the thoughts which had been busy in her breast, rejoiced in her presence, we may well say, without one repining thought. The world was nothing to him without Ella. What was the sacrifice of the whole world for her?

Oh, could we but see the hearts of those we love, plain and undisguised, trace every emotion, perceive the course of every thought, instead of beholding them vaguely, like figures in a mist, glancing through the dull veil of language, or expressed in the

doubtful hieroglyphic of demeanour!— Could Adrian and Ella have had that plain view, happy would it have been for both. But we must pass rapidly over the month that followed.

Davie was fairly installed in his new quarters ; and he was happy as the day was long—or if there was any alloy, any spot upon his bright sunshine, it was a sort of smothered feud between him and Palham, the gardener. How it originated is difficult to say ; but the truth is, that Davie himself had not only some taste for gardening, but, considering the condition of his intellect, and the spot on which he had passed the last twenty years of his life, very marvellous natural skill. Doctors, however, will disagree, and the gardener was continually grumbling about the silly old fool spoiling his garden, while Davie was

continually insisting upon a neater and more accurate system of horticulture. Strange to say, however, Davie, the fool, grew daily in the good graces of Adrian Brewerton. He was simple, he was humble, he was affectionate, possessing three qualities, rare any where, but, perhaps, more rare in that part of the world than any where else. Adrian, too, took a curious sort of interest in conversing with him. His mind offered, in its peculiar condition, a new object of study, and he liked to contemplate it, as we are fond of gazing upon a shallow stream, where we can see the very pebbles at the bottom. To set Davie upon giving his opinions, especially upon difficult subjects, was a great delight to Adrian ; and he would sometimes walk up and down before the windows of the house with him, for an hour, discussing knotty points with great gravity.

They were one day seated on the door-step, as the spring was tending towards summer, while Ella, busied with some household cares, remained in the panelled room, with the windows open, listening, well pleased, to the tone of her beloved husband's voice. How the conversation began, matters not ; but it was gradually led by Adrian, or his half-witted companion, to subjects which the former had often discussed with the more acute Charles Selden. We believe Adrian began by saying that some one was “ a low-born, low-bred fellow.”

“ Low-born !” repeated Davie, with one of those looks so frequently seen on the face of such as himself, full of meditation, but hardly of thought. “ Low-born ! I don't quite understand that. Low-bred is well enough ; but I don't rightly understand being low-born.”

“ Why not, Davie ?” asked Adrian, with

a smile. “ I mean, born of low parentage, in a low condition of life—” He knew that he should not wound Davie ; and he did not know that any other ears could overhear him.

“ Poor ?” asked Davie.

“ No, not poor,” replied Adrian, “ for many a gentleman, with very good blood in his veins, may be poor ; but I mean a man of no family—no station in life—not of a race of gentlemen.”

“ Ha !” said Davie, thoughtfully, as if he were still puzzled ; and then looking suddenly up into Adrian’s face, he enquired, “ What difference does that make ?”

“ Oh, a very great difference, in most men’s opinion,” answered Adrian. “ One generally attributes high qualities to long races of pure blood, in men, as well as in animals—But who have we coming here ?”

“ Oh, that is Bill Herring, Herring’s

boy," cried Davie ; and their conversation, in regard to the advantages of blood and family, ceased for a time ; but the secret of Adrian's prejudices was no longer in his own keeping. It had reached the ear which it was most likely to pain.

The boy, Herring's son, brought up a letter, addressed in a very straggling hand, to Miss Ella Keelson, and bearing the post-mark of Charleston upon it. Adrian took it, and entered the house, to look for his beautiful wife ; but he found her so deadly pale, that he was quite startled. "Why, what is the matter, my dearest love?" he exclaimed, throwing his arms round her. " You are as white as ashes."

" Nothing, dear Adrian, nothing," she answered, " only a little faint. I shall be well directly—what is that letter?"

" For you, and not for you," answered

Adrian, laughingly. "But, dearest Ella, you really over-fatigue yourself with your household duties. Those little feet, and taper fingers, and this delicate form, were never made for so much running about, and such laborious offices."

"Nonsense, Adrian," replied Ella, with the blood mounting into her cheek. "I was born for rustic life."

"You were born, I think, to be preserved as a little jewel," replied Adrian, laughingly — "To be laid up in cotton, and only to be looked at, and kissed occasionally, with very reverent lips — There now, you look well again, my own love ; and so you shall have the letter, if you tell me that it is rightly addressed. Look at it, Ella. Is that your name ?"

"No, no, no," she cried, with much vehemence. "Thank God, it is not ;" and cast-

ing her arms about his neck, she burst into tears.

We will not pause to scrutinize the emotions in which those tears arose ; but turning again to the letter, will merely say, that when Ella at length opened it, she found the following curious epistle.

“ MISTRESS ELLA, MADAM :

“ Your old negro woman, Kitty Gifford the nurse, tells me to write to you a letter to say that the villains have carried her away to Charleston. She says, and I think it very likely, too, that they will make her a slave, or call her one, which comes to the same thing here, especially as old Volney has got hold of her, who is a great rogue, as you know, and your father knows too. She wishes you or your father would come directly, or send somebody to prove that she

is not a slave ; for she was quite free before your grandfather's death, and they will make her a slave and keep her a slave if somebody does not come very soon. She thinks your father is dead, she says ; for she has a notion of having seen him fall down when there was a shot fired ; and no matter for that, you can come if he can't ; so no more at present from yours respectfully,

“ SIMON HICKMAN.”

The name attached to this strange epistle threw no farther light upon the subject.

Adrian and Ella consulted through the whole of that afternoon, as to what steps were to be taken, in consequence of the letter just received. They knew that the police were anxious to obtain some information regarding the murderers of old Mr. Keelson, although, in those days, police matters were

not particularly well managed, and communication between different and distant States was slow and difficult ; so that a villain of the blackest dye, at one extremity of the land, was tolerably sure of finding refuge at the other end of the Confederation.

“ I will ride over to the town to-morrow,” said Adrian, in conclusion, “ see the authorities, and endeavour to have immediate steps taken in this business. The murderer is evidently in Charleston, and should be apprehended. Besides, poor Kitty must not be neglected ; and we must formally demand her liberation. I will go away early, and be back by dinner-time.”

Ella’s whole heart had seemed in the conversation ; and she had tried to keep it there ; but in the silent hours of night, other dark and terrible thoughts intruded, and kept her from repose.

“Were those actually,” she asked herself, “the feelings and opinions of Adrian—her Adrian? Did he really feel, that because there was not noble blood in her veins, that because her father was a man of humble name, and no ancient race, Adrian looked upon her as an inferior, had made a struggle to overcome his prejudices or his principles, before he asked her hand, and had wedded her, rather from a sudden burst of enthusiastic compassion, than from true and elevated affection?”

“No,” she answered, feeling she had gone too far in that course of thought. “No. He loves me dearly—devotedly. That I cannot doubt; but will that love be for his happiness? To a woman, it would be all-sufficient; but can that be the case with a man? He must—he soon will be called upon to mingle in more active scenes of life.

He cannot waste such energies, such talents as his, in this solitude, feeding upon love—nothing but love. No, no. He has duties to perform, and will soon find it time to perform them. He must go into the busy world. He must seek society. He must mingle with men of his own station ; and then—(poor Ella !) and then, men will talk of his plebeian wife—sneer, perhaps, at the fisherman's daughter—laugh at his having married so lowly for a pretty face—despise my husband on my account. There are some men—and I thought he was one—who would ride triumphant over such things—trample them under their feet—laugh them to scorn—be proud of Ella, for her love and for her worth, if I have any. But I see the vulnerable point—too late—alas, too late—and I have laid it open to be pierced by all the arrows of malevolence, and scorn, and petty spite.”

She wept silently, as she thought somewhat in this strain. She struggled against her sobs, for fear they should wake him ; but for five long hours Ella never closed an eye, and when the hour for rising came, she was pale, exhausted, and careworn.

Adrian was too kind and affectionate, too deeply loving, not to perceive the change in her appearance ; though he feared to alarm her by noticing it. But he decided upon his course at once, believing that some illness was impending over her.

We may as well here state what that course was, although other circumstances frustrated the scheme.

There was an old physician in the town, with whom his anatomical studies had made him well acquainted, a man both of skill and kindness ; and Adrian resolved to call upon him, and ask him to drive out and see

Ella, as if on a mere friendly visit. The physician, however, was absent when he called, and Adrian wrote him a brief note stating his object. It was three days before that note was delivered ; for Adrian's friend had gone to New York upon business, though the servant of the house did not think fit to state the fact.

At the Police Office, Adrian obtained very little satisfaction. He found that no very active steps had been taken to ensure the punishment of Mr. Keelson's murderer. Some of the inferior persons knew little or nothing of the subject. Others answered drily ; and the best assurance that he received was, that his information should be attended to, and every thing should be done that was right. At the post-office he found a letter for himself, which he put in his pocket without reading, and rode home, already somewhat late.

The long hours of his absence had passed very sadly with Ella. Her only companions had been painful thoughts. Indeed, she now did more than think. She hesitated—hesitated as to her own conduct. Shortly before Adrian's return, her bitter reveries were interrupted for a moment by the girl Ruth coming in upon some plausible errand, and then staying to ask, with a look of affectionate interest, whether she could not be of any help to her.

Now the truth is, that Ruth had no real business in the room, at all; but Ella's changed appearance, her deep sadness, and an occasional trace of tears upon her eyelids, had not failed to attract the attention both of the affectionate girl and the old cook. Servants are always fond of moral joiner's work, and never fail to put fact and fact together, sometimes very accurately, some-

times bunglingly enough. Ella was known to have received a letter on the preceding day. She and Adrian, instead of walking or driving out, as usual, had remained at home, shut up together, conversing earnestly. The murmur of their voices had been heard through the whole afternoon, talking in a less quiet and lover-like tone than they had ever been heard to speak before. Ella had risen pale, grave, thoughtful ; and Adrian had driven off immediately after breakfast to the distant town, while she remained in pensive solitude, mingling thought with tears. The servants concluded there had been a quarrel. What could be more natural ? and certain it is, that both the maids came to the same conclusion on that point ; but there they parted opinions. Ruth, who had known more or less of Ella from childhood, felt fully convinced that

Adrian had been harsh and unkind. She had seen a few specimens in her own family of how sour marital tenderness can turn after but short keeping ; and she was quite certain that Adrian was very much in the wrong. The old cook, on the contrary, thought quite the reverse, believed that nothing which her young master did could be wrong ; and with a very scandalous want of the *esprit de corps*, declared that it was “only some woman’s pet.”

Ella replied to her maid’s offer of assistance, that she wanted nothing, adding, however, after a moment’s pause, “Not just at present, Ruth. Perhaps hereafter.”

It is wonderful how the germs of resolutions grow, and sprout out into strong plants. Those words, “perhaps, hereafter,” were the first indications of a half-formed purpose—

a hesitating resolution, which might have died away and been forgotten, had it not speedily received fresh nourishment.

The little interruption was serviceable in enabling her to calm herself ; and very soon after, Adrian returned. His account of his proceedings was soon given : dinner was served, and over ; and then, for the first time, as he sat beside Ella at the table, he remembered the letter which he had not yet read. He took it from his pocket, laughing at his own forgetfulness, and said, “ Luckily, Ella, it cannot be a billet-doux.”

He then opened it, and spread it out before himself and her, putting his left hand upon it to keep it open, and throwing his right round her waist, that they might read it together. The letter was in a strange hand, and ran as follows :

“ MY DEAR SIR :

“ I am travelling in this country, and promised my father, Lord Malefort, to inquire after the relations which we have in the United States. I find, to my sorrow, that you are the only one of our family now remaining in this part of the world—your father, Major Brewerton, whom we have often heard of, as a gallant officer, being, I am told, dead within the last year. Your address has been furnished to me by a college companion of yours; and I write to say, that it would give me great pleasure to pay you a visit, and to form a personal acquaintance with you, if it suits your convenience to receive,

“ Yours, faithfully,

“ EDWIN BREWERTON.

“ P.S.—You are, of course, well acquainted with all the links of connection

between us. Your answer will find me more surely if addressed to the Post-Office, New York, than to the inn, where I find the people exceedingly careless, and, to say the truth, not very civil.”

Ella looked up in Adrian’s face. It was grave and stern.

“ What do you intend to answer?” she asked, in a tone of voice which trembled with much emotion; for she looked forward to his reception of this young scion of nobility as a touchstone, on which his real feelings would be tried. But the solution of any remaining doubts, was to come sooner than she expected. Adrian’s words were few, and though kind and tender in tone, seemed to her mind to want their usual frankness.

“ I shall decline to receive him, my love,”

he replied ; and a moment after, as if he felt that the sentence ending there would be abrupt, he continued, saying, “ We are really in no condition, Ella, to entertain peers’ sons here.”

But the sting was in Ella’s heart. “ His low-born wife is the obstacle,” she thought. “ He may make the sacrifice willingly—he might—he would, I believe, sacrifice much more for me ; he would live here in loneliness ; he would waste his precious hours ; he would debar himself of all society—but it must not—no, it must not be. I see it all now. A light has broken in upon me—a fatal light—showing me the destruction of all my hopes, and the thorny path of duty. He, too, will be pained—he, too, will mourn. But better a few short hours of agony, even, than a life-time of regret.”

It was hard for her to restrain the tears

that were rushing to her eyes—hard to keep down the sobs that were struggling in her breast ; and terrible was the effort to master both. But she did master them for the time. Every hour after, during that day and the next, was an hour of anguish. It is strange, when a mind is preoccupied by one strong impression — especially if that mind be an earnest and sensitive one—how every little incident is unconsciously distorted, to serve the purposes of the preconceived belief. A thousand such little incidents happened within the next four-and-twenty hours, which Ella applied to confirm the unhappy view she had taken, and to strengthen a purpose which, every moment, assumed a clearer and more distinct form.

The anguish, the struggle, the terrible battle of the mind ; the restless night, the thoughtful day, could not be without their

effect upon a frame so delicate as Ella's, and Adrian saw with dismay, what he thought the rapid progress of approaching disease. As the physician had not come according to his request, he sent over a note asking for an immediate visit, without any of the precautions which he had previously enjoined ; and so alarmed had he now become, that he turned over in his mind the names of all the other medical men in the place, with the intention of directing the gardener to bring some other aid, if he did not find the gentleman to whom he was first addressed. But there were objections to all. Charles Selden was too young, and though an excellent surgeon and anatomist, had little experience in the treatment of disease. The same objections applied to two or three others ; another was the slave of particular theories, to which he made every thing bend ; an-

other had one peculiar mode of treatment for every disease, which treatment, it was reported, was remarkably successful in relieving many classes of invalids from all need of farther medical attendance. He recollects, however, that in a town on the other side of his dwelling, some eighteen miles on the road to Boston, a physician had been practising for nearly thirty years, whose name had acquired a vast reputation throughout the whole of that part of the country ; and to him he determined to apply, if the gardener did not find the person to whom he was first sent.

The man was long absent, and returned without the physician, bringing information that he had gone to New York for an uncertain time. It was now nearly night. Ella seemed somewhat better—calmer. The truth is, her mind was made up — the

struggle was over — uncertainty was at an end — she had nothing but grief to endure.

Nevertheless, Adrian determined to rise early, and to ride away at once in search of other aid. He found Ella awake when he first opened his own eyes, and there was no appearance of her having slept at all.

“ Dearest Ella,” he said, “ you are ill. I see it well, my love. I saw it all yesterday, and the day before. I sent the gardener yesterday to bring Doctor Woolcot ; but he was absent at New York. I am now going at once to — to bring another physician to you — a man whom I know to be of the greatest skill. Perhaps you had better not rise, dearest, till you see him. I may be five or six hours absent ; but I shall not be more.”

“ Indeed, I am not ill,” replied Ella, kissing him tenderly.

It was all she said ; and Adrian leaving

her, mounted his horse and rode away. The road was very bad, and hilly. He was longer going than he expected. When he arrived, the physician was out upon his professional round ; and Adrian waited for him two hours before he returned. He agreed to go over with the young gentleman, and felt a real interest in the anxious affection which Adrian displayed. But he had several other cases to attend to before he could set out ; and nearly three hours more elapsed ere they were on the way. They rode fast ; though not so fast as Adrian could have wished, and the sun was already setting when they arrived.

“ This is a strange, desolate sort of place,” said the physician, as they rode up ; but Adrian sprang from the saddle without answer, and after calling the gardener to take the horses, looked into both the sitting-

rooms for Ella. She was not there. He then ran up to their bed-room—she was not there either; and coming down again, he called loudly for Ruth. The old cook appeared, saying in a very peculiar tone, “Mistress Brewerton is out, sir. She has been out a long while, and Ruth is out too.”

The physician had been standing in the panelled chamber with the door open; and hearing what was passing, he came out, saying, “Here is a letter on the table for you, Mr. Brewerton.”

Adrian darted into the room, with vague feelings of terror, which made his heart beat so violently as to take away all power of speaking.

Ella’s handwriting was upon the back of the letter. He knew it well; though the lines were uneven, as if written with a shaking hand. His heart beat more vehemently

than ever ; but he tore it open, and read with his eyes straining wildly upon the paper. He had hardly got to the bottom of the page, when his cheek and brow, which had been flushed with excitement, turned deadly pale, and after a staggering effort to catch the table, he fell prone upon the floor, striking his head violently, and cutting his temple. The physician bent over him for a moment, and then, leaving him where he lay, took the letter without ceremony, and read the contents. They were as follows.

“ MY BELOVED HUSBAND :

“ I must give you terrible pain—I know it—I am sure of it ; but, oh Adrian ! you know not what agony I inflict upon myself. But I have been taught from childhood that no grief—no pain—no sacrifice should be

put in competition with duty ; and I feel that I am doing my duty to you, and to society, in the step I am about to take, whatever be the agony to both of us.

“ When this reaches you, I shall be far away — long miles distant from him in whom all my earthly affections are bound up ; but wherever I go — be it to the remotest part of the earth — I shall bear with me the same unchanging, devoted love which actuates me even in wringing my own heart, and paining yours.

“ But I must tell you why I go, though in doing so I may add to your grief. My tears blot the writing, and my thoughts whirl, so that I know not if you can understand me. I have ever loved you dearly — I own, without shame, I did so before you asked me to be your wife. In the very joy — and in the sorrow which then — except

for that bright beam of light—surrounded me on all sides, I forgot every consideration but that I was to be yours—that the loved one was to be mine. I forgot difference of station—difference of race—of fortune—of every thing. I forgot that I was but a fisherman's daughter—you descended from an ancient, noble race. The difference, the disparity, if you will, my Adrian, never occurred to my mind. If it had, I assure you solemnly, that I would not have wedded you, had the sacrifice broken my heart.

“ Within the last few weeks, I have not only become sensible of that disparity; but assured that you yourself feel it, not with any undervaluing of your poor Ella—for I know that you value her more than she deserves—but with a sensitiveness which would render our union a curse rather than a blessing, if I did not remove all cause for

sneers and contumely on the part of the world, and every sense of degradation on yours, on account of a step which love and compassion equally prompted. Were I to remain with you, the class of society in which you were born, and have been brought up, would be closed against you, if not by the prejudices of others, by your own delicacy of feeling—you would spend your life almost in solitude—you would wither under regret—and all your talents and qualities would be wasted in a narrow, narrow sphere.

“Can Ella suffer this? Can she remain worthy of your love—can she be what you thought her, if she allow this to be, when by one brief, though terrible effort, she can free you from the chain she heedlessly, unconsciously fastened upon you? Oh no, Adrian, no!

“I beseech you, my beloved, cast from you all feelings of grief and all unwillingness to mingle in the world. Few know of our marriage—let it rest in silence for all the rest of mankind—mingle in society—act the noble part assigned you in the great events of life—receive the high-born relations and friends whom you now exclude ; and if you cannot forget Ella herself—which I will not believe you can do—forget that she was beneath yourself in station, and of a plebeian race. Or if that be not possible, for one educated as you have been, think of her as one dead ; and only mourn for her as for a flower we may unconsciously tread upon in our walks.

“Do not—do not—I beseech you, Adrian, as a last request—seek to discover where I go, or to bring me back. I feel that it is for your happiness that I should be away.

I feel that it is right that it should be so. The opinions you entertain regarding the differences of family and station, though love might subdue them for a time, would still recur with effect, not only painful but detrimental. Yet I must hear from you—I must hear that you are well—that active occupation, and the fulfilment of high duties are consoling you; and if you will write to me to the post-office at Baltimore, your letter will reach me, though not very soon perhaps. I, too, will write to you after a time, when I can tell you that I am more calm, more composed, though ever, very dearest husband,

“Your affectionate—your devoted

“ELLA BREWERTON.

“P.S.—I have means enough with me for all my present wants, so let not the thought that I am in poverty add any thing to your grief.”

“ Quite sufficient—quite sufficient,” said the physician, when he had read the letter. “ Here is the cause of the wife’s illness, and the husband’s fainting. Stupid young people ! This is the way boys and girls go and make themselves miserable, just as if there was not enough wretchedness in the world, without the brewing fresh batches for their own drinking. So he’s of noble and ancient race, is he ; and she a fisherman’s daughter ! Well, she writes a beautiful hand, and a very touching letter, and is a great deal better than he is, I dare say. However, we must do something for him. Hang it, he is bleeding like a pig ! ” and he went to the door, calling for some assistance.

“ Ah, Doctor, what are you doing here ? ” cried a voice he knew, and Charles Selden walked into the hall, with his valise in his hand.

“Why, I came to see one patient, Doctor Selden, and have got another instead,” replied the physician, moving back into the room again. “That young man who lies there in syncope, came over to bring me to his wife, who was very ill, he said; but when we got here we found the wife gone, and this letter on the table, which knocked my young friend down like a sledge-hammer.”

“Ella gone! — Ella Brewerton gone!” exclaimed Charles Selden, with a look of utter amazement; and snatching up the letter, he ran his eye hastily over it, and then threw it down again with a very vehement exclamation.

“I thought so,” he cried, “I thought so! These mad prejudices of Adrian’s, rooted in his mind by his foolish old father, I dare say, have deprived him of the dear-

est, the sweetest, the most beautiful wife that man could find upon the earth, and separated two hearts that loved each other with a love hardly earthly. Poor, poor Ella ! I can feel for you, sweet girl ;" and the tears actually trembled in Charles Selden's eyes. "Poor Adrian, too. He is the wretch of other men's follies, not his own. But we must do something for him, Doctor. This is a more serious affair than you imagine ; and it will either turn his brain or break his heart, unless we can light up hope again, and bring back Ella to him. Why the tenderness of that very letter will make her loss ten times more terrible. If she had scolded him, as he deserves, it would have been nothing at all in comparison. Here Palham, Palham, you old knave, come and help us to carry your master up to his room."

The gardener hobbled in with his lame leg; and Adrian was soon raised and carried to his own solitary chamber; but there is no necessity for detaining the reader with details of all that followed. Adrian Brewerton was brought to himself with some difficulty, and as soon as he was completely master of his own faculties, he started up wildly, declaring that he would go after Ella that moment. The surgeon and Charles Selden used every argument to persuade him to refrain; but the feeling of weakness which soon came over him, proved a better argument than any they could use.

“No, no, Adrian,” said Selden, when he saw him somewhat subdued, “it is useless pursuing your lost angel, now. I have read the letter without scruple, in order to discover what was the matter with you; and I

tell you, as your friend, and one who has always advised you well, if you would but have followed his advice, that there is nothing for you to do, but to write to her at Baltimore, as she tells you, and assure her that she is mistaken as to your views."

"I will write this moment," cried Adrian, trying to rise.

"No, you must not," answered the old physician, "because you are neither in a state to write, nor to think."

"Wait till to-morrow," said Charles Selden, "and then write. I will send a few words, too, telling her what I know to be true, that your happiness, your health, your life depends upon her immediate return. She has under-estimated your love for her, Adrian, and over-estimated your prejudices."

Adrian pressed his hand upon his eyes ;

but feebleness had rendered him tractable and Charles Selden, who was doubtful as to what would be the effect upon his mind, remained by his bed-side all night. The letter, however, was written to Baltimore on the following day, though even then he was unable to rise from his bed; and his friend extracted from him a promise, that he would wait at least one month for an answer.

Adrian insisted, however, upon reading Ella's letter again; and when Charles Selden went to seek it in the room below, he found that the old gardener had taken it into his safe keeping. Whether he, or his female companion in the kitchen, had ventured to scrutinize the contents, we cannot tell; but certainly, by this time, even the old cook herself was convinced that Ella was an angel upon earth.

CHAPTER VI.

What equall torment to the griefe of mind,
And pyning anguish hid in gentle hart,
That inly feeds it selfe with thoughts unkind,
And nourisheth her owne consuming smart !
SPENSER. “ *Faerie Queene.* ”

DRESSED in the deep mourning which she had always worn since her father's death, and with her face concealed by a thick veil, Ella Brewerton—whose history we must now follow—walked rapidly over the hills, several hours before her husband's return to the house. The path took many a zigzag turn as it climbed the acclivities ; but it was much the shortest way towards the turnpike road, which it was Ella's object to reach

before the stage from a distant place passed on its way to town. Ruth followed at a considerable distance; for she was retarded by dragging rather than carrying a small portmanteau, which was not, indeed, very heavy, although it contained all that her unhappy mistress had provided for her journey. The path, which was in fact a gulley washed out by the strong freshets always prevailing there in the spring, was full of sharp stones, made slippery by recent rain; and Ella's delicate feet, little accustomed—fisherman's daughter though she was—to such rough walking, were dreadfully bruised and cut, long before she arrived at the old milestone, which stood by a long trough plentifully supplied with clear spring water. Here the driver of the coach was accustomed to stop every day, not only to water his horses, but to take up any passengers who

might come down from the eastern slopes ; an event which had become of more frequent occurrence since Adrian had made his residence in the neighbourhood, and Charles Selden had been an occasional visitor. The hilly nature of the ground, and the roughness of the road, prevented Ella, in spite of all her exertions, from arriving at the spot till the moment before the stage was about to drive off, and it required a good deal of persuasion on her part to induce the man of the whip to wait till the panting Ruth came up, although it is difficult to understand what was his motive in not readily complying, as he had not a single passenger inside.

It is not impossible that the good man's objections might arise from a certain morbid feeling of independence and self-importance, which made him reluctant to grant any favour without debate, although his mind

was made up to yield from the beginning, and it put him to no actual inconvenience to do so. Strapping the trunk as soon as it arrived, however, upon an immense scaffolding that projected from behind the coach, and assisting the two ladies to get in—for he of course made no difference between mistress and maid—with a gentleness of manner quite inconsistent with the ferocious indifference of his talk, the Yankee Jehu deliberately mounted his box, and crossing his legs with provoking slowness, started his horses at a very easy trot, as if speed or time, which had been all-important to him a moment before, were now of no consequence whatever.

Then came upon Ella the full sense of her situation. Throwing herself into the back corner of the carriage, she leaned her head against the leathern curtain and

sobbed. It was a moment of mortal agony—it was an hour of terrible struggle: but the combat was soon over; the mind vanquished the heart; and at the end of a few minutes, she drew her thick veil aside, to breathe more freely.

With feminine tact, Ruth had not attempted consolation; for though she knew not exactly the circumstances in which her young and beautiful mistress was placed, she knew that they were all painful, and divined that consolation would be in vain. She gave a glance at Ella's fair face, however, as soon as the veil was withdrawn, and beheld no look of dull and sullen grief, but rather the pale, tender, almost inspired expression of countenance, which ancient painters dreamed as that of Saint Agnes, lighted up with a pure and holy consciousness of an entire sacrifice of self—heart and

mind, hope and happiness—to the welfare of one whom she loved better than any thing except her God. There was a slight discoloration about the poor girl's eyes—a blue transparency of the lids, which often comes after great grief, even when there have been no tears. Ella's hair, too, which was usually arranged with scrupulous care, was now pushed back from the forehead, as if by the frequent pressure of the hand upon the throbbing brow and temples. But her mouth was so calm—its lines in such perfect and peaceful repose, that it, at least, gave no evidence of the storm of emotions which had swept over her.

Ella made an effort to converse with her companion ; but she found that effort vain ; and changing her seat to the middle one, she let down the window, and gazed out for a moment at the melancholy, but familiar

scenery which was passing from her view. Then, closing the window, she resumed her first seat, and dropping her veil over her face, remained absorbed in her own thoughts. The windows rattled ; the springs creaked and groaned ; the coachman talked and shouted to his horses ; object after object was passed ; but Ella heard not, saw not, moved not, until the stage drew up to discharge its mail-bag at the little post-office, which, with a singular disregard to the convenience of the population, was placed on the outskirts, instead of in the centre of the town.

After pausing to say a word to the post-master, the driver came back to the side of the vehicle, and asked, in his unceremonious way, where she was going. Ella begged to be set down at the house of a small tradesman, who lived close by the water, and with

whom her father had had some dealings. She recollects that his wife, whom she had seen on two or three occasions, appeared to be a kind, motherly sort of person in a homely way, and she had no doubt of finding with her a safe and respectable asylum, till she could continue her journey.

Be it understood, that the coachman was not under the slightest obligation to drive his passengers one step beyond the stage-house at which he put up, and which was at some distance from the part of the town to which Ella was desirous of going. Nevertheless, he whipped up his horses, merely refreshing his feelings with a low-toned grumbling soliloquy, and started for the place she had named, at a good pace. The tradesman's wife received her unexpected visitor with the greatest cordiality, and readily assured her of a lodging for herself

and her maid, without stopping to enquire into the circumstances in which it was required ; and the driver, of his own accord, offered to carry the luggage to the lady's room. When he had got it there, with an unaccountable expansiveness of heart he made a general proffer of his services, and proceeded with his own hands to change the arrangement of some of the furniture, so as to make more room ; and yet when Ella, to testify her gratitude for his kindness, offered him a trifle for himself, after paying the fare, he held the money in his hand for a moment, looked at it with a curious eye, and then threw it down upon the table, saying, “Thank you, ma'am ; but I'd have you to understand that I'm nobody's hired servant—not I :” and strode out of the room with an air of offended dignity.

Ella ran after him, and assured him she

had no intention of hurting his feelings; but, though he received her explanation with a certain degree of graciousness, the wound seemed still to rankle a little; for without saying a word, he sprang upon his box, drew his hat fiercely over his brows, and with a sharp whistle, drove off at a rate which quite redeemed the character for speed of both his horses and himself.

In spite of the kind-hearted entreaties of her hostess and of Ruth—the latter perhaps actuated by mixed motives of sympathy and hunger—Ella refused to take any refreshment. She had a bad headache, she said, which nothing but sleep could alleviate. Moreover, she hinted, she had various arrangements to make, and to think over, which would render it agreeable for her to remain in her room during the greater part of the evening.

The good woman, Mrs. Place, patted her kindly on the shoulder, told her to do exactly as she pleased, and left her for the remainder of the day free from any intrusion. Even Ruth herself, on Ella telling her that she should have no further occasion for her services that evening, importuned her no more to eat any thing, although she declared that a nice chop, or a bit of chicken, would certainly do her good. She set off, however, to try the prescription on herself, and found it very effectual in satisfying the cravings of a hearty appetite, which not even a sympathy for Ella was able to subdue. Her mistress had warned her to be discreet ; but a lady's maid, although often employed as a confidante, is not a very safe depositary for a lady's secrets ; and Ruth, it must be owned, was not long in relieving herself of as much of Ella's history as she

herself knew. Assuredly she made but a bungling story of it: the only information which she could give, regarding the cause of Ella's quitting her home, amounting to no more than that her husband "had done something dreadful;" which statement left their worthy hostess not only in a state of greater sympathy for Ella than ever, but also in considerable doubt as to whether the "*something*" dreadful spoken of by Ruth was an attempt to poison, or cool deliberate bigamy.

We will not attempt to describe the manner in which Ella passed the remainder of that day, and the night that followed. She remained alone in her own room, with the door closed; and when Ruth looked in as night fell, to enquire if she could be of any service, Ella's back was turned towards her, and her sweet but tremulous voice replied, "Of none whatever. I shall not want any

thing more to-night." Early on the succeeding morning, the girl again opened the door as noiselessly as possible, and went in on tip-toe. She found her mistress asleep upon the bed, dressed as she had been the day before, while an arm-chair stood in front of the table near, on which lay a pillow, indented evidently by the pressure of a head, and still wet with recent tears. Ella's slumber was so profound and still, and her face was overspread with so death-like a pallor—not infrequent in the sleep of exhaustion—that the maid started back in alarm. The noise she made aroused Ella, who raised herself suddenly, with a low exclamation, apparently unconscious at first of where she was. The reality soon came back to her like a painful dream, and she bent down her head for a moment, as if to pray, clasping her hands together in an agony

of overwhelming emotion, when she found another day dawning upon her sorrow and solitude of heart.

Ella soon recovered herself, however ; and turning to Ruth with that gentle smile, which seemed to sanctify her beauty, she said, “ We must leave this place as soon as possible, Ruth. Immediately after breakfast we will go down together to the shipping. Tell Mrs. Place, for me, that I should prefer the breakfast here, if not inconvenient to her ; and that I should be glad of her company, if she can give it to me.”

Ruth hastened to seek their hostess, who was already up and dressed ; and on receiving the message the good woman replied, that the dear child should have her breakfast when and where she liked. “ I will get it ready for her myself,” she said, “ and then I’m sure it will be right ; and I shall

be quite happy to go and take mine along with her, or to do any thing in the world to be of service to so sweet and ill used a creature."

The girl delivered the reply literally, somewhat startling Ella by the last expression of commiseration. Shortly after, and while the day was still quite young — for early hours prevailed universally in the times of which we write — the bustling mistress of the house made her appearance in Ella's room, with all the paraphernalia of the breakfast table. After a few moments' delay, the breakfast was brought in, consisting of all that the hostess thought would tempt her guest's appetite.

Mrs. Place soon perceived, from various indications in the room, as well as from the appearance of Ella's eyes, that her beautiful visitor had passed the greater part of the

night in watching and in tears ; and seating herself at the table, the really kind-hearted woman endeavoured, by pouring forth a flood of vague sympathy for insinuated misfortunes, to gain the confidence of her young guest ; but it was all in vain. Ella answered her questions gently, and kindly, but guardedly ; and they were not so direct as to compel her to refuse a reply. Mrs. Place almost thought herself unfairly treated ; for she had promised herself—and how often are we accustomed to throw upon others the responsibility of our promises to ourselves — that Ella would make her the confidante of all her troubles during the meal, to which she imagined herself specially invited for the purpose.

She made one more effort, however, saying, “ I do indeed wish I could be of any service to you, or give you any advice ;

but, of course, one can't do any thing without knowing what is the matter."

" You are only too kind, and considerate to me, dear Mrs. Place," replied Ella. " I have disturbed the regularity of your household, and have used your hospitality long enough. Circumstances compel me to go a long way from home, and I shall leave this part of the country to-day, if it be possible. I am going out to see for some means of conveyance ; and if I find one ready, I shall go at once, so that I may not be able to return, and take leave of you. In that case, I will send for my little luggage. I hope the time will come—though I hardly have a right to hope so—when it will be in my power to make you some return for your goodness to me."

" Well, well, my child," replied Mrs. Place, taking Ella's small white hand in one

of a very different hue and texture, "what and how great your troubles may be I do not know. Of course it is no business of mine," she added, intending to convey a slight reproach; "but this I can and will say; they come from no fault of yours, you sweet, innocent, ill-used darling!"

There was something in the homely honesty of the good woman's language, which, in spite of all Ella's efforts to control herself, touched her heart so deeply, that she could not prevent a warm tear from dropping upon the rough hand which was pressing her own. But when she had conquered her emotion, she wrapped herself in a shawl, and again dropping her veil over her face, set forth, accompanied by Ruth, to seek for a vessel bound to Charleston, or some neighbouring port.

The search was long and wearisome, not

that the shipping was very extensive, but that the vessels were scattered at intervals along the wooden quays, which extended for a mile or two, both up and down, the shores of the little inner bay. Ella was ignorant of the manner in which they were distributed, according to their trades ; and for a long time went hither and thither without guide, while many a young clerk who was being initiated into the mysteries of merchandising, by performing the morning duties of opening the warehouse, and sweeping out the counting-room, stopped for a moment in his dusty avocations, to watch with wonder and admiration the beautiful form, graceful and lady-like in every motion, that was gliding from vessel to vessel at such an unusual hour of the day.

From several rough sailors the poor girl got but a short and indifferent answer, or

at best, but very indistinct information, till at length, to her unspeakable relief — we must not say joy, for the relief had its pang — Ella found a schooner laden with timber, which was to sail for Charleston that day at noon.

The skipper, who was also the owner — a very customary combination then — belonged to the free and independent order of humanity ; another specimen of the same genus with our friend of the reins and lash. He also, like many of his tribe, was a good-hearted man, if judged by his actions ; but taken at his word, you would have thought him a complete brute. He was one of those men, in short, who seem fond of knocking their fellows down, for the purpose of picking them up again.

A porter pointed him out to Ella, on the deck of his vessel ; and ascending by a plank,

which led from the quay to the ship, to him she at once applied for a passage for herself and Ruth.

At first, he made every sort of objection — protested that he had not thought of taking passengers that voyage, that he had made no preparations, had laid in no passengers' stores, and that it was too late then to get any. There was but one berth in the vessel fit for a lady, he said, and his own wife must have that, as he had more than half promised to take her along that trip ; and in fine, that he could not, and would not take the two applicants on any consideration.

Ella answered all his objections as well as she could, assured him that she was not dainty in her food, wished no special preparations made for her, declared that she would gladly dispense with a berth, and

sleep on the floor of the little cabin, if he would allow her to share it with her maid ; and in the end, finding all in vain, was turning away in despair, with tears in her eyes, when he called her back, saying, “ Drat it, my dear ! If you want so bad to go, you shall go, even if the old woman has to stay at home this time ;” and he then proceeded to demolish severally all his own objections, as if by after-thoughts, telling her where he thought he could get provisions fit for her to eat, how he would have a sofa brought down for the girl to sleep upon, and devising an infinity of arrangements with every sort of alacrity. His whole manner changed completely after he had made up his mind ; and from that moment, he became wonderfully kind, and anxious to oblige. Nor must the reader imagine that he was moved by any mercenary motive ; for such was not the

case. He bustled about somewhat to the neglect of his own business, doing a thousand things to add to Ella's comfort on the voyage, more than she required, and sent up his son, who officiated as cabin-boy, to fetch down her luggage from the house of Mrs. Place. All the time, too, he called her "my dear," with a fatherly tenderness which his white hair well justified, and in short, treated her both in word and act as if she had been a favourite daughter.

If the human heart be naturally full of perversity, surely some of the best hearts in New England must have got an additional drop.

There was only one thing which the skipper seemed to forget; and that was to apprise Mrs. Skipper that he did not intend to take her to Charleston with him that voyage. Now whether the difficulty he had

made on her account, was the mere figment of a dogged sort of irritation at being put out (as he called it) by the application of passengers, when he expected none, or whether he communicated her fate to his better half during a quarter of an hour's absence from the ship, we cannot say; but certainly Ella heard nothing of his wife's disappointment, and quietly took possession of the little cabin, which, according to his first account, had been destined for another person.

At the appointed hour the little schooner set sail, with wonderful punctuality. There was a good stiff breeze blowing; and the vessel flew before it, with a rapidity which brought back vividly to Ella's mind many scenes of terror associated with that fatal bay. But other feelings had too firm a hold upon her for alarm. She stood on the

deck, holding on by the rigging, as the schooner passed, one by one, the familiar objects on the eastern shore. There were the fishermen's huts, with some of the boats drawn up upon the beach—there was the cottage, with the blue smoke curling from the chimney—the scene of her first meeting with Adrian, of her father's death, and of her ill-omened marriage,—there was the light-house, whose revolving lamps she had so often watched when her father was out at sea ; and beyond this was the blue ocean—to her mind, a type of all that was terrible and obscure: like Death in its greediness, like Fate in its uncertainty.

They were soon upon its bosom ; and as they swept round the sandy spit that ran out for some distance from the shore, at the mouth of the bay, Ella fancied that she caught a glimpse for a moment of the chim-

neys of a house dearer to her than even her old dear home—a house whose roof covered all that was left for her to love on earth. Adrian was there; and oh, how she loved him at that moment! How she loved him, even when, for his sake, she was tearing herself away from him for ever!

The very thought brought emotions that almost suffocated her, and sobbing like a child, she ran down below. Her brain seemed to turn. All the arguments she had used to her own heart seemed extinguished in the agony of that hour. She regretted, almost with the wildness of despair, the course she had taken. But in time, other thoughts returned—she remembered that she had sacrificed herself for his happiness; she again felt that she had done well! Heaven knew, and Adrian knew the purity of her motives in the course she had

followed. What value to her was the opinion of any others ?

But the struggle was not so easily over this time. At first, a strong and newly-aroused feeling—an enthusiasm—a frenzy, if you will, had carried her forward with the precipitancy of a torrent, against which the stout swimmers, love and hope, had striven in vain. Now, the impression was no longer fresh. Time had given thought leisure to act, and had effaced the most vivid lines which imagination had drawn. Doubts rose up, as they will after every act that seems irrevocable—not doubts of her own motives, but doubts of her own judgment. She had acted for the best, she knew ; but had she acted wisely ? Had she really consulted Adrian's happiness ? Had she, in choosing between two sorts of anguish, inflicted on him the least ?

She hoped so—she believed so ; but the very thought disquieted her terribly—troubled the only fountain from which the fever of her grief could hope to draw one last draught of consolation and repose. If she had sacrificed all that was to her most dear—if she had inflicted the same sacrifice on him, without attaining the result she had hoped for, oh, how terrible would be her fate ! Oh, how bitter her regret !

Once, and once only, she asked herself, if passion had had no share in her decision—once, and once only, she doubted her own motives. But conscience, with that small still voice which never lies, spoke now to comfort her ; and justified her purpose, and her motives, if it still left her doubtful of the result of her acts. That doubt was agonizing enough to bear ; but the very questioning of conscience, and the calm,

consoling answer that it gave, afforded some support. Even a better was near at hand.

The book of God was lying on the table in the little cabin. She took it up, and sought consolation thence. The Christian was even stronger than the woman—gradually the tumult of emotion subsided : she was calm but sad.

CHAPTER VII.

Could but our ancestors retrieve their fate
And see their offspring thus degenerate ;
How we contend for birth and names unknown,
And build on their past actions, not our own,
They'd cancel records, and their tombs deface,
And then disown the vile, degenerate race ;
For fame of families is all a cheat :
'Tis personal virtue only makes us great.

DE FOE. “*The True-born Englishman.*”

THE letter to Ella, which Adrian, as has been stated, was persuaded to send, instead of seeking for her in person, had proved more difficult to write than he had expected. In mere contemplation, it had seemed but necessary to pour forth to her, undisguisedly, the whole feelings of his heart—

to tell her his grief, his agony—to assure her that life without her was insupportable to him, and to beseech her to return at once, with all those entreaties best fitted to touch a woman's heart. As long as he kept to this strain, all was well; for sincere grief is always either mute or eloquent: but as Adrian wrote on, other considerations suggested themselves. Ella, he thought, knew well, at the moment she took her terrible resolution, that he would suffer as he was suffering; and yet, from a steady conviction that it was right to do so, had inflicted the anguish which she foresaw, upon him, and upon herself. Would any description of the first effects of her departure shake her resolution, and induce her to return? Would any thing less than an assurance that she had mistaken his opinions, attributed prejudices to him that he did not

feel, or which were now banished, satisfy one who could wound her own heart, and sacrifice all her happiness, from a sense of duty ?

But could Adrian give that assurance ? Could he tell her that such prejudices had never existed, or even that they were now removed ? He felt that, in honour and honesty, he could not. He was sorely tempted to assert it—he was half inclined to believe that he was convinced, and to tell her so. But when he came to scrutinize his own feelings, new doubts and hesitations came upon him—all the arguments which Charles Selden had used seemed vain, and he forbore from expressing convictions, which he was by no means sure had been received by his mind. He finished his letter, however, by words which were likely to strike the chord which vibrated most strongly

in Ella's bosom. She had left him from a sense of duty, he said ; he was sure of it, and he reproached her not ; but there was another sacred duty, which he must call to her remembrance. He bade her recollect the marriage vow which she had plighted to him, so short a time before ; and he solemnly called upon her, by that vow, to return to him at once, as her first great duty.

He did not show the letter to any one ; but he told Charles Selden the last words he had written, and was glad to find that another, possessing some knowledge of Ella's character, judged that those words would have complete effect.

“ Take my word for it, Adrian,” said his friend, “ that she will fly to you as soon as she receives your letter. But you must not be too impatient. Remember, she tells you it may be long ere she can hear from you,

and wait patiently ; for I will answer for it with my life, that she comes as soon as she does so.”

A month wore away dully and heavily. Adrian recovered his corporeal health ; but he could not shake off the dark despondency that oppressed him. Though it be good to know one’s self, yet men may be too fond of anatomizing their own hearts, and Adrian was so. He believed, with Charles Selden, that Ella would return at once ; but he often asked himself what he should say, if, after her return, the subject of birth and race were to arise — how he should make her understand that, though as a mere speculative opinion he attributed still great influence to blood and high descent, yet that he looked upon her as altogether an exception—one beyond, above all rule, and that practically, what were per-

haps his prejudices, had no effect. He tormented himself with such thoughts daily ; and still the very fact of Ella's absence—the want of that beloved form to light his home—the silence of his heart, to which her voice had been as music—all filled him with gloom not to be cast off.

If Adrian felt Ella's absence sadly, poor Davie, the fool, felt it sadly, too. He never spoke of her ; he made no enquiries ; but he wandered about with a look so sorrowful, that there could be no doubt of what he endured. When Adrian, as was almost his daily custom, went forth to walk up and down along the desolate side of the hill, Davie would often follow him ; and hour after hour, they would pace backwards and forwards, sometimes side by side, sometimes the young man a step in advance, with his firm, slow, heavy-hearted tread, the old

man limping after. Often they spoke not during the whole walk ; but at other times they would say a few words to each other, or even converse for a short time ; but the name of Ella was never mentioned but once between them.

The nearest approach that they ever made to the subject most busy in the minds of each, was, one day, when Davie made some enquiries as to whether poor Kitty, the negress, had been heard of.

“Once,” replied Adrian. “Only once. She was then in Charleston.”

“Ah — Charleston,” rejoined Davie, “there are many black folks there, I think.”

“A great many,” answered Adrian.

“I wonder if their souls are black,” said Davie, abruptly; for this seemed a favourite question with his mind.

“Of course not,” answered Adrian, al-

most sharply. “ What should make you think so ? ”

“ Because God made both soul and body,” replied Davie. “ Why should he not make both of one colour ? ”

Adrian mused, and Davie enquired, “ Don’t you believe God made man ? ”

“ Certainly,” replied Adrian. “ I must be an Atheist else.”

“ I don’t know what that means,” replied Davie, humbly. “ I am very ignorant and stupid. But I fancied you thought differently, from what you said one day about high-born and low-born.”

Adrian started. Not only did the man touch, harshly, upon the painful subject of so many of his thoughts, but he recalled, in a moment, to his mind, the conversation which he had held with him, seated in the porch of the house, on the very day when

the first news of poor Kitty was received. He recollects that Ella was in the sitting-room, close at hand, the windows open, and might well hear all that passed. He recollects the state of extreme agitation in which he had found her the moment after, and he comprehended, at once, that it was then the first blow had been given. He saw that her resolution had not been taken so suddenly as he had at first supposed—that it was not one solitary indication of family pride, which had led her to the conclusions she had formed; and his despondency deepened, rather than diminished.

“I wish you would answer me,” said Davie, in a tone almost of entreaty. “I want to know what to think about these things.”

Adrian had almost answered, in his irri-

tation with himself, “Think that I am a fool ;” but suddenly another idea struck him. “Tell me, what do you think, Davie,” he said, in a franker tone than he had before used. “Do you not believe a man is better for being well-born, than for being low-born ?” and then seeing his simple companion look as if he did not clearly comprehend the terms, he added, “— I mean for being the son or grandson of a lord, rather than being the son of a poor man—a mechanic ?”

“If you mean by being better, that he is more comfortable, I cannot tell,” replied Davie ; “for I never was the son of a lord. But perhaps he may be, after all ; for lords are rich generally, and I suppose that is comfortable—though I cannot tell that well ; for I never was rich either. But if you mean that he is a bit the better man, I don’t believe it at all.”

“ And why not, Davie ? ” asked Adrian, reasoning perhaps a little too finely for the poor man ; but yet recurring to an exemplification of which he was fond, and which was within Davie’s comprehension. “ Why not, Davie ? Do you not think, putting all opportunities and inducements to well-doing aside, that there is something in blood, which makes one man better than another ? You know all about dogs ; for I have seen you play with one many a time ; and you see the pure breed makes the greatest difference. Does it not do so with man ? ”

“ Whew—too ! ” cried Davie, whistling. “ Not at all—not at all. I don’t think that in the least. Don’t you see, sir, God makes the difference between different sorts of beasts. Kings make the difference between lords and other men.”

“ Stay — stay,” cried Adrian, catching

him by the arm, as this new view presented itself to him, and anxious to grasp it firmly, and examine it closely. But Davie ran on, not easily stopped when once set going.

“ Do you think, sir, if King George—I recollect being under King George very well, when I was young—do you think, if King George had taken it into his head to make a lord of poor Davie, Davie’s sons would have been a bit better than yours, who are no lord at all ? Now I have heard Master Keelson read out of a big book, about people who were lords, and peers, and all that, long ago, and a set of greater knaves, and blackguards, and swindlers, and cut-throats, never were. They would cheat, and lie, and swear, and murder ; and though there was a good man, too, here and there, the only good thing about all the rest was that they would fight like bull-

dogs, and any man can do that. Why I used to think that poor Davie was a prince to them, and I am sure none of them was fit to black Master Keelson's shoes ; for he was as brave as the best of them, and wise, and good, and kind, and true into the bargain. Now, is it a bit better, sir, to be the son, or the grandson, or the great-grandson of those old knaves, that he read about, than to be his son or grandson ? I can't think it, nor I don't think you think it either."

"Thank you—thank you, Davie," cried Adrian, grasping the old man's hand, and wringing it hard. "You have set my mind in the right track. Strange, very strange ! You have convinced me. I say, with you, Davie, better far to be the child of such a man as Keelson, than to be descended from the purest Norman blood that ever flowed in the veins of a mailed butcher."

“Lord love you,” cried Davie, “I convince any body! Don’t tell it, or they’ll think you a fool too.”

“Well they may,” said Adrian to himself in a low tone; but Davie ran on.

“Now I dare say, you have never seen a lord,” he said, “and don’t know what it’s like. I have seen two or three in my young days, and though some of them were likely men enough—not a bit worse than if they had been the sons of a common man—yet as for the rest, if their fathers and grandfathers were ever so good, it did not make them any thing but a pack of ill-conditioned curs, doing and saying every thing that was wicked, and shameful, and wrong; and the worst of it was, in those days, men let them do it, because they were lords. One of them used to pelt me with orange peel, whenever I passed by the house where he was in Bos-

ton ; and who made him or his father a lord I don't know ; but I'm sure it wasn't God, or he'd have made him handsomer, and better to match. His ears and his shoulders well nigh touched each other, and so did his two knees, and his mouth run up under his high cheek bones, like a river under the rocks. There was a pure breed for you, Master Adrian! — but I do wish Mistress Ella would come home ; for the place feels very lonely without her.”

“ She is coming—she is coming, Davie,” cried Adrian, in a more joyful tone than he had used for many a day. “ She is coming ; and we will all be happy again ;” and he hastened back to the house, with a lightened breast, and a heart beating freely.

For a few minutes after he had entered the painted chamber, which we described in the beginning of this work, his thoughts

were all in confusion ; for his spirits rose with the gushing tumult of waters from a long repressed fountain. But after a time he became more calm ; and then his first act was to sit down and write a few glad lines to her he so fondly loved.

He had just finished his letter, sealed and addressed it, when Charles Selden entered, and Adrian held out his hand to him, with a look which made him ask immediately, “ Has she come ? ”

“ No, Charles—alas no,” replied Adrian, “ but this letter is intended for her. It is to tell her, that when she returns, there will be no cloud left—no, not one. The prejudice is gone, and gone for ever from my heart. Charles, I am convinced at length, that in this matter of birth, you have been right and I have been wrong.”

“ I am heartily glad that my arguments

have found favour at length," replied Charles Selden.

"Nay, not your arguments," replied Adrian, actually with a smile. "The conviction, which a philosopher could not effect, has been wrought by a fool. *Sæpe etiam stultus opportune locutus est.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes:
That when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him.

SHAKSPEARE. "*Much Ado about Nothing.*"

THE vessel which conveyed Ella Brewerton reached Charleston in safety, after a short but not very boisterous passage. As she was bringing-to, Ella, who had been below making her little preparations to go ashore, returned to the deck, and gazed around her; but it was not with that sort of vague sensation of loneliness, which, independent of all other personal feelings, often seizes upon us on entering a strange place. There was

something in the scene before her which appeared familiar, but yet so indistinctly and faintly impressed upon her mind, that she could hardly tell, at first, whether it seemed so from recollection, or merely from certain associations. There were many objects around her which rose up like things whose images had long lain buried in the memory, without entirely passing from it ; and at moments, as one by one they seemed to grow upon her, as if once well known, she would cast her eyes beyond on either side, seeking for something, she could not tell what, which she felt ought to be there also ; and when she found the indefinite object of her search, the mystery only appeared the greater.

“Surely,” she said to herself, “I have never been here before ; and yet how can it be otherwise ? The remembrance of all

these objects seems to have remained obscured for a long time ; but now it is coming back gradually and imperfectly. Perhaps in time it will be as bright as ever :—and yet, after all, it can be nothing but a fancy or a dream.”

As she was thus meditating after the vessel had come to her moorings, the skipper approached and took her hand affectionately.

“ I am sorry, marm,” he said, “ that our people are all too busy to help you with your things up to town, but I will find some one to do it for you in a minute.—There,” he continued, suddenly pointing to an old man who was leaning with folded arms against a post at the end of the pier, “ there’s the very man for such a job. He’s always on hand, the rascal. Shall I call him, Miss ?”

Ella assented, and immediately he roared at the top of his voice, “Come here, you half-breed varmint. This way, copper-skin. Here’s a lady wants a porter to carry her baggage;” and then turning to Ella again, he asked, “Shall we get you a carriage, Miss?”

She answered that she would prefer to walk, and then added, “He is to be trusted, I suppose?”

“Oh yes,” replied the skipper, “he’s an honest rascal. I know him of old.”

In the mean time, the old man whom he had addressed after so unceremonious a fashion, had come on board, and stood hat in hand — part Indian though he was — waiting for farther orders. Ella pointed out her baggage; and taking it up without speaking a word, he threw the portmanteau over his shoulder, and left the vessel. The

old captain accompanied his fair passenger to the gangway, whispering, "He's a cute fellow, that Ingin—knows every thing in these parts—but honest—honest, which is more than can be said of most;" and bidding Ruth follow her, Ella hurried on shore.

The old porter stood waiting, to be directed where to go, which was indeed more than Ella could tell him. "My good man," she said, after a moment's hesitation, "I am a stranger in this place and have no friends at whose house I can stop. Pray show me the way to a quiet and respectable inn, if you know of any such."

The half-breed looked at her steadfastly for a moment, and then merely answering, "Yes, ma'am," in an abrupt sort of jerking manner, started on his way, in spite of his burden, at such a rapid pace that Ella found it difficult to keep up with the sort of loping

strides he took. When they reached the inn, which was a very tolerable one, and where Ella easily found all the accommodation she required, the old man ran up stairs with surprising activity, and set down the trunk in a corner of the room assigned to her. He paused for a moment to receive his fare, and to wipe the perspiration from his face ; and Ella had a better opportunity than had before occurred of noticing his somewhat remarkable appearance. The wrinkles on his face showed that he was very old ; but his hair was so black, and his eyes so bright, that from them alone no one would have suspected his age. The height of the cheek bones, and the falling in of the cheeks, rendered the long, deep lines that furrowed his visage, up and down, particularly conspicuous. He was above the ordinary height ; and his form, clad in a blue suit of light

cotton material, seemed as erect and firm as that of a young man.

He was turning to leave the room, when Ella stopped him, saying, "Do you happen to know, my good friend, a person in this town named Simon Hickman?"

The man turned suddenly round, exclaiming sharply, "And what if I do?—What do you want with him?"

"I wish very much to find him," said Ella. "He wrote me a letter, which I received some time ago, for a poor woman who could not do it for herself. He may be able to give me some information as to where I can find her now. If you know any thing of him," she continued, observing a sudden change in the man's look, "do tell me where I can find him, and I will pay you whatever you ask."

The old half-breed deliberately took a

chair, and seated himself, uninvited. Then shading his eyes with his hand, he continued to gaze in Ella's face, with a strange, vague expression that alarmed her. She was about to move towards the door, when the old man rose up with a sudden start, as if he had only forgotten himself for a time, and then said, in the abrupt tone in which he seemed always to speak, "Are you Miss—Miss Keelson?"

"I was," replied Ella, colouring slightly: "I am now Mistress Brewerton; and you—"

The old man interrupted her, exclaiming, "Why, I am Simon Hickman!" and he again threw himself into the chair, and laughed with a low, half-suppressed chuckle, as if he were mightily amused at some conceit which happened to take his fancy at the moment.

"And where is Kitty?" exclaimed Ella

“ For heaven’s sake, tell me where I can find her !”

The half-breed merely telegraphed with his thumb over his shoulder, retaining his seat all the while ; and Ella was compelled to repeat the question several times before she could get any other answer. At length, her strange companion, as if fearful of being overheard, looked shrewdly round the room, which Ruth had left a moment before, and then replied, in a quick sharp whisper, “ She is at old Volney’s—fast in his clutches—he claims her as his slave, the infernal old villain !” and here the strange man burst forth into a torrent of blasphemy, which shocked Ella’s ears to hear.

She had already noticed that there was a great difference in his language, not only from the jargon of the blacks, but even from that of the uneducated classes of white

people, and this caused her to marvel the more at the horrible execrations he was now pouring forth.

It was some time before the violence of the old man's passion had subsided; but when it had done so, he remained for a short time looking down upon the floor in silence, and then suddenly exclaimed, "He wanted to make a slave of me—of me!"

He almost shouted the last words, at the same time rising to his full height, and folding his arms, while his breast heaved, his hands opened and closed convulsively, and his eyes sparkled with a wild defiance, that brought instantly to Ella's mind the idea of the tomahawk and the scalping-knife.

A moment after, however, he turned sharply towards her, saying, "Shall we go? —shall we go at once? — It is only eight miles—Now?" and seizing his hat, he darted

towards the door, without waiting for an answer.

“ Immediately,” replied Ella, calling after him. “ Get a carriage immediately. I will be ready in a moment.”

The old man was gone before the last words reached him ; and in a few minutes he entered the room again with his hat upon his head, to inform the lady that the carriage was waiting below. There was no delay on Ella’s part, and followed by Ruth, she descended to the street, where her strange conductor was already holding open the carriage door for them to enter. Ella was hardly in the vehicle, when he rudely pushed in Ruth after her, and rapidly closing the door, sprang upon the box by the side of the driver. The horses started off at great speed ; and as they went, the old man would bend down upon his seat, from time to time, and look

into the carriage through the front-glass, apparently to satisfy himself that Ella had not been spirited away : and then he would jerk his head with a significant toss, as if he would have said, “The time has come at last.”

They had been driving for nearly an hour; and Ella, who had been gazing forth from the window, with a good deal of anxiety and perturbation of mind, was beginning to think that they must be near their journey’s end, when the carriage suddenly stopped in the middle of the road, the door was flung open, and the half-breed sprang into the vehicle.

Ella gazed at him both with surprise and alarm, as he seated himself unceremoniously upon the seat opposite to her, and closed the door again. But he nodded his head, as the horses once more started off, saying,

"No harm meant, Miss ; but it will never do for him to see me just yet ;" and he added, as if to himself, in a fierce tone, "nor for me to see him.—You must let me," he continued, "remain behind in the carriage, while you go to the house. Ask for the old villain, Volney, and demand to see Kitty.—She's a nigger, it's true ; but she's not like the rest of them, miserable African devils that they are."

The last words were uttered in the tone of one musing aloud ; and about a quarter of an hour after, the carriage drew up in front of a house standing at a little distance from the road, on the left-hand side.

There was no carriage-way up to the house, and Ella getting out, and passing a wooden wicket, entered a pebbled lane that led by a slight ascent to the mansion. She noticed that, although the house was a large

one, and there was a fine verandah, supported by wooden columns, which extended along the whole front, still there was an air of poverty and decay about the premises that argued but little in favour of either the wealth or the taste of the proprietor. There was no bell at the front door, and no means of calling attention, but a lion-headed knocker, hanging by a single screw in one of the upper corners. Ella knocked several times before any one appeared in answer to the summons ; but at length a slovenly young negress, without shoes or stockings, made her appearance, who, in reply to Ella's inquiry, if Mr. Volney was at home, threw open the parlour-door, and asked the visitor to walk in, while she herself went to seek her master. Ella had now to wait some time, which she did standing, with her veil down ; and she had an opportunity, before

the negress returned, of remarking that an air of elegant comfort reigned within, very much at variance with the aspect of things without. The house seemed to be, in short, like one of those hypocritical Jewish residences in eastern cities, in which those who are permitted to enter, are startled by a magnificence utterly inconsistent with the meanness of the external aspect.

After a time, the girl came back, saying that she had found her master, who would be with the lady in a few minutes, if she would be seated. Without taking the proffered chair, however, Ella walked to the window, and partly drawing aside her veil, gazed out upon the prospect. Her spirit, perhaps, did not follow her eyes ; but either painful thought, or the novel view before her,—in every thing so unlike her New England home,—engrossed her so entirely,

that she did not notice the approach of steps, the sound of which was deadened by a heavy carpet, until she became conscious, rather than saw, that some one was standing close to her. She turned suddenly round and dropped her veil, but not until the stranger had caught a hasty glance of her features ; and she noticed that he started slightly and changed colour. She found herself standing in front of the tall, venerable figure of a man somewhat advanced in years, though it would be difficult to say how old he was precisely. He stood perfectly erect, and his height could not have been less than six feet two or three inches. His dress was scrupulously neat, and composed altogether of black, with the exception of the white neck-cloth which suffered no shirt-collar to appear, the muslin breast of his shirt, and an enormous frill of the finest cambric.

His legs, too, it must be noticed, were encased in a pair of well-cut and well-polished top boots. A heavy gold chain, to which several large seals were attached, hung from beneath his waistcoat: his hair, which was white and thick, was combed behind his ears in the most perfect order; and in fact he was altogether a very respectable-looking personage. Nor did his face belie his general appearance. It was rather pale than otherwise, although it bore general indications of robust health. His features, when in repose, might have been pronounced noble. His nose was thin and aquiline; and his forehead, completely exposed, though somewhat receding, showed a large mass of brain in the anterior portion of the skull. He had, however, a constant habit of twitching up and down the lids of his small grey eyes, conveying the impression that they

were weak. This habit gave a disagreeable expression to his countenance ; and there were some persons who judged that it was merely a trick, resorted to for the purpose of frustrating any attempt to fathom his thoughts and motives through his looks. When he spoke, too, he had a curious way of raising his upper lip at every word, with a sharp sort of convulsive jerk, as if he were determined that the expression of his mouth should tell no more secrets than his eyes.

All these particulars were noticed by Ella more rapidly than we have been able to describe them ; and when the stranger, after a few common-place words of civility, extended his hand courteously to lead her to a seat, she felt for him an unaccountable dislike, quite independent of the preconceived prejudices against him, which we must not deny that she entertained ; for she

took it for granted that this must be Mr. Volney.

Nevertheless, there was something so impressive in his manner, that Ella for a moment doubted whether she was right in the supposition, and hesitated to mention the object of her call. It was not until she had sunk down into the chair to which he led her, and he himself had taken a seat opposite to her, in such a position that the whole light fell upon her veiled face, while his own remained in shadow, that Ella found courage to stammer out, "There is an old negro woman, Kitty Gifford by name, lately brought from New England, who I am told is here. I should like to speak with her, if you please."

"You are mistaken, madam," said Mr. Volney, rising from his seat, and speaking with cold, though hurried politeness. "I

assure you there is no such person here. I do not know where she is—I can be of no possible service to you in this matter—command me in any thing else, my dear madam—command me in any thing else."

Poor Ella was inexperienced and timid, her nerves shaken with grief, and her frame weakened by a long sea voyage. Mr. Volney's tone was so positive, his denial of all knowledge of where Kitty was, so direct, his intimation of a desire to put an end to the interview, so unequivocal, that Ella did not dare to pursue the conversation. In a maze of painful bewilderment, she also rose, merely saying, "I beg your pardon, sir—I beg your pardon;" and bowing slightly, was quitting the room, when Mr. Volney, with ceremonious politeness, insisted upon her taking his arm and permitting him, bare-headed as he was, to see her to her carriage

—for he somehow had learned that she had one in waiting.

Ella protested against his taking the trouble ; but in vain. Mr. Volney persisted, and was not satisfied until he had handed her into the carriage, availing himself of the opportunity his politeness afforded of taking a glance at the persons within the vehicle.

Simon Hickman kept his face averted ; but it would seem that Mr. Volney recognized him ; for, as he turned to walk back to the house, holding his chin thoughtfully in his hand, Ella heard him say, “ So, so—a pretty plot ! ” as if a new light had broken upon his mind, from something he had just observed.

“ She is not there,” said Ella, as soon as the door of the carriage was closed, and the half-breed had looked round. “ She is not

there ! what shall I do now ?—Where shall I turn me ?”

Convinced too easily by the positiveness of Volney’s assurance, she aided to mislead her half-Indian companion, who took it for granted that she had some stronger proof of Kitty’s absence than the mere assertion of a man whom he knew better than Ella did. Nevertheless a mistake, as not unfrequently happens, led him right in his conclusions.

“ Not there !” he exclaimed at once. “ Then she has been sent to Mrs. Ashmore’s —some villany in the wind, depend upon it —’tis but a mile and a half further on—let us go and see, ma’am.”

Without waiting for a reply, he dashed out of the carriage (although Mr. Volney was now standing half way up the pebbled walk, watching with folded arms the proceedings of the party), and, with activity

truly wonderful in a man of his age, sprang upon the box, took the reins from the driver, and drove off at a furious rate.

Ella had hardly recovered from her surprise at the sudden mention of Mrs. Ashmore's name—a name she had not heard since it had been pronounced on a day connected with the dearest remembrances of her life—when the carriage entered the gates of a sort of park, and drove rapidly along a winding road, bordered by fine trees, and leading to a noble mansion.

The carriage soon drew up in front of the house. An old negro woman was seated in the porch, knitting; and when Simon pulled in the horses sharply, so as to throw them quite upon their haunches, she rose, and approached the side of the vehicle, as if to see who these dashing visitors could be. In the mean time, Simon had jumped from

the box and opened the door ; but Ella had alr ady risen from her seat ; and was ready to spring out. She had caught a sight of the figure in the porch—had recognized it instantly ; and in a moment after, she was in the arms of poor Kitty herself, who laughed, and cried, and hugged her young mistress, much to the astonishment of the more sedate and unimpulsive Ruth.

But if the warmth and grotesqueness of Kitty's gratulation made a comic impression on the mind of the maid, they had a more powerful, a more painful effect upon the mistress. They recalled, in a moment, the last terrible scene in which she had beheld that dark, but affectionate face ; the awful prognostication of coming woe which those lips, now overflowing with tenderness, had then uttered ; and the bloody death of a

beloved parent ; while, all the time, came rushing up—surging, as it were, through every other memory, like breakers amongst rocks—the recollection of a wedding day in mourning, of fresh tenderness, of new-born passion, of terrible disappointment, of a bitter struggle and a stern resolve—of a husband lost, and happiness sacrificed for ever.

Weak, way-worn, exhausted with grief, all this was too much for Ella Brewerton. The whole scene—the house, the park, the carriage, Kitty herself—seemed to whirl around her, while a cold, sick, deathlike sensation took possession of her heart, strangling its beatings ; and she sank down gradually in the arms which had often rocked to rest the light sorrows of her infant years. She did not actually faint ; for she heard sounds, and felt the pressure of hands bear-

ing her into the house ; but thought seemed to stop, all things grew misty before her eyes, and though she strove to speak, her lips uttered nothing but a sob.

CHAPTER IX.

“ —— You do seem to know
Something of me, or what concerns me.”—

SHAKESPEARE. “ *Cymbeline.*”

WHEN Ella returned to a full consciousness of her situation, she found herself lying on a sofa, in a large and handsome drawing-room, with Kitty at her feet; while a dignified matron-like lady, somewhat above the middle height, and retaining traces of great beauty, bent quietly over her. The old black woman was still in a state of great excitement, and poured forth a succession of vehement exclamations, not very intelligible to any one but herself.

Ella made an effort to rise, but the stranger gently prevented her, saying, "Lie still, my child—lie still. You are safe, and with friends. Do not attempt to speak yet. I know much about you—partly from this good woman, partly from my own knowledge—more, perhaps, than you yourself are aware of; but this is no time for explanations. What you need now is rest and refreshment. Lie quiet for a little longer."

Ella again dropped her head upon the pillow, closing her eyes, while a tear stole through the long dark eyelashes; and Mrs. Ashmore—for it was she who stood by—gazed intently on her face, murmuring to herself, "Can it really be his daughter! There is a likeness to him when he first returned; but faint—more like her mother, perhaps—poor child; how she must have suffered!"

Then turning to Kitty, she said, in a low tone, "How can she have found her way here, if, in the short letter sent her, my name was never mentioned?"

"Can't tell, missis," Kitty replied. "Tink she only come to find Kitty. Tink she know nothing of de Ashmores. Massa Walter nebber spoke to her of de ole times—I tink not. He tell me nebber do so—But de papers safe—Tank God, de papers safe!"

"What is the meaning of that wedding ring?" said Mrs. Ashmore, in a whisper.

"Can't say," answered Kitty, in a tone of surprise, bending down over Ella's hand.

"Hush!" said Mrs. Ashmore, as Ella again opened her eyes, and suddenly rose up with a bewildered look, saying that she felt well again, and was ready to return to town, if Kitty would only come with her.

“To town, my child!” replied Mrs. Ashmore, with a faint smile. “Do not think of any such thing. This is your home for the present, and as long as you choose to make it so. There was an unhappy difference, in years past, between your father and several members of my husband’s family; but all those feelings are buried with the dead; and I am ready to do all that I can to comfort and console you. A chamber is quite ready for you, when you have strength to go to it; and you had better, perhaps, try to sleep for a time.”

Ella listened with surprise; but her own thoughts were in a state of too great confusion for the mind to act readily amidst the circumstances which surrounded her. She made no answer; but suffered Kitty to lead her to an upper room, where she found Ruth already quietly installed, though

in some amazement at all that was taking place. The old negress cast a glance, that was any thing but affectionate or amiable, at the New England girl, whom she seemed to look upon as a usurper of her own privileges : and as soon as Mrs. Ashmore, who followed, left the room, Kitty found some excuse to get Ruth out of the way. Ella's maid had hardly closed the door, when Kitty again gave way to a new paroxysm of almost frantic love and joy. But though Ella was touched with the faithful creature's ecstasy, it seemed to bring back to her mind, more strongly than ever, her own desolate and unhappy condition. She mingled her own tears with the happy ones of her old nurse ; but there was more of sorrow than of joy in Ella's—more of bitterness than of comfort.

When both had somewhat recovered their

composure, the thoughts of each turned naturally to what had intervened between the hour of their parting and their meeting again—that dark space, filled with event, into which we long to throw light whenever we have been separated from those we love. Each, however, would fain have heard the history of the other; and Kitty could not be brought to go on with her own tale, till Ella had related a part, at least, of that which had befallen herself, and explained the mystery of the wedding ring. She did so briefly—very briefly; but she shrunk from attempting to make the old negress comprehend the causes of her quitting her husband—at least fully. Some motive she was obliged to assign; and while declaring that he had treated her with all kindness and affection, and that she loved him ever dearly, she added, “The truth is, Kitty, I

am too humble—too low-born to be a companion for him. He has tried to conquer prejudices—though, perhaps, I should not call them so—for my sake, and would have concealed them but for an accident. We are not equals in the world's eyes ; and I have not the right or heart to make his life a martyrdom to my happiness."

Kitty had already interrupted her more than once in the course of her narrative ; but now she exclaimed, with a look of much astonishment, " Not equals !—Not equals ! —He must be proud husband indeed, Missy Ella, not to tink you his equal—ay—I tell you all about dat."

" No, no, Kitty," said Ella. " Let us quit this painful subject ; and do you tell me all that has happened to yourself, and how I chance to find you here, apparently free and in comfort."

Kitty did her best to give something like an intelligible account of her adventures; but her story was both lengthy and confused; nor was it rendered very much more pellucid by the peculiar phraseology of her race. The entrance of Mrs. Ashmore, in the midst, caused her to stop in the detail; but that lady, finding how she was occupied, bade her go on, and often put in a word which helped her marvellously forward.

It seemed that Kitty, notwithstanding her formidable resistance—"for I fight like a dragon, Missy Ella," she said—had been thrown into the boat, and carried off by Sparhawk and his crew to the ship, which was lying in the mouth of the bay. The anchor was immediately weighed, and the villains made all sail, Sparhawk laughing to scorn, in the speed of his vessel, called the

Falcon, all thought of pursuit. At first Kitty was put in irons, although she was not otherwise particularly ill treated. Sparhawk, indeed, swore at her often, and questioned her, more than once, about some papers which he said were in her old master's house, muttering to himself several times in her hearing, "I will have them, by ----. I shall lose the old man's money, else."

Kitty, however, where her affections were concerned, was fully a match for Captain Sparhawk in point of cunning; and she vowed and swore in the most determined way, that she knew nothing of any papers that her poor master had, and did not believe he had any, although at the very time she had them herself, concealed in the bosom of her high-necked gown. Sparhawk indeed never thought of searching

her person, for it seemed utterly improbable that she should have what he wanted in her possession ; and he steered direct for Charleston, without fear or hesitation, quite certain of arriving there, in his fleet craft, long before any intelligence of Keelson's murder could be received. He had grown impudent, too, in crime ; for he had more than once before escaped punishment, when the testimony against him was very strong.

At the end of the second day Kitty was freed from her irons, and then contrived to conceal the papers in a more secure place ; but she was fettered again on arriving at Charleston, and was left in the custody of the second in command, while Sparhawk himself went on shore. The subordinate paid very little attention to her ; and during the absence of the captain, several men came on board to discharge the vessel of

some goods — however obtained — which formed the freight; and amongst these men, Kitty spied out the half-breed, Simon, who had once, it seems, been her fellow-servant. A communication was soon established between them; and Kitty entreated him to write to Ella telling her what had occurred, and to take possession of the papers, and keep them safely for her young mistress. He undertook and performed both these commissions, and moreover hung about the ship, till Sparhawk returned late in the evening with his uncle, Mr. Volney.

In the dusk of the hour, Simon endeavoured to overhear some part of the conversation between the worthy Sparhawk and his no less worthy uncle, in order to ascertain the probable fate of poor Kitty. He learned little, however, catching nothing

but detached fragments of sentences, from which he could only gather that a man had been killed by Sparhawk in an attempt to execute some undertaking suggested to him by his uncle; and that the old man, furious at this untoward event, used very unmeasured language to his beloved nephew, mingling no very christian threats and reproaches with various pious ejaculations, which found themselves in strange company.

After a time, Kitty was removed to Mr. Volney's house, where, boldly pronouncing her his slave, he kept her for some weeks, pursuing a curious and variable line of conduct towards her, which soon showed the negress that he had some distinct object in view. At times he would be exceedingly harsh and severe, at other moments kind and familiar. Gradually he softened more

and more ; hinted that Kitty might render him a great service : promised largely, all sorts of things, but threatened terribly if she betrayed or deceived him. He hesitated long before he would come to the point ; but, at length, he seemed convinced that in the affection of the old negress for her foster-child, he had a hold upon her from which she could not escape ; and he promised her that, if she obeyed his directions to the letter for one month, he would send her back at once to New England and to Ella. Kitty shrewdly affected to jump at the hope, saying she would do any thing for that, and that she knew “ Massa Volney too well to play de fool wid him. He would have de marrow out of her bones if she did.”

Then came the development of his object, which Kitty was about to explain at length ; but Mrs. Ashmore stopped her, while a

warm glow came over her faded but still beautiful countenance.

“Never mind—never mind, just now, Kitty,” said the lady. “The fact is, my dear,” she continued, addressing Ella, “this man is my attorney, and was for many years the too much trusted agent of my late husband. His general conduct I have long suspected, and had made up my mind to discharge him, even before he endeavoured, as this good woman tells me, to induce her to work upon my fears, by threats of very severe loss, for the purpose of obtaining my consent to an impudent and knavish project of his, which he has entertained ever since my poor son’s death, and which I am not vain enough to misunderstand, notwithstanding all his cajolery. It was only late last night that Kitty told me the whole facts, and revealed to me the purpose for which

he had placed her here with me, declaring that she was a runaway house-slave of my late husband's. My determination was soon taken, and your arrival will only hasten its execution, as you will see, if you will stay here with me a few months."

" Ay,—but you do not know all Missy Ella's story," said Kitty. " Let her tell you, Missus."

But Ella shook her head sadly. " I cannot—indeed I cannot, just now."

" Well, I tell," cried Kitty ; and in her own peculiar jargon, with her own peculiar comments, she related to Mrs. Ashmore all that she had just heard from Ella herself, concluding what she had to say, by exclaiming, " But de papers is safe—de papers is safe—dey tell all."

" I should be very glad to see them," said Mrs. Ashmore. " Where is this man Simon to be found?"

" He down stairs," cried Kitty, starting up. " I ole fool not to tink of dat. Dare say got um in him pocket. He find out from what ole Volney say, dat dey wort someting. I go see—I go see ;" and away she ran as fast as she could go.

A few words of further explanation in regard to Ella's journey, though she still shrunk from detail, took place between her and Mrs. Ashmore, during Kitty's short absence. Not more than three minutes, however, elapsed before the old negress returned, carrying in her hand a small packet, too small, indeed, to seem of much value, which, passing Mrs. Ashmore, she gave to her young mistress herself.

Ella gazed upon it for a moment or two, in silence. The outer cover, though somewhat soiled from the many hands through which it had lately passed, was evidently

fresh. It was tied round with red tape, sealed with black wax, and bore written upon it, in her father's hand, " For my dear Ella ; when I am gone."

The sight of her father's writing, in those few words, moved Ella greatly ; and it was with a trembling hand that she cut the tape, and examined the contents of the packet. They consisted of one parchment, not very large, old and time-worn, and of two or three small papers, yellow with age, and bearing some writing, a good deal faded. The first paper that Ella examined was a certificate of marriage celebrated in England in the year 17—, between one Walter Ashmore and Ella D'Arcy. The next was an attested extract from a parish register, of the birth of Ella Ashmore. The third, referred to the same parties, Walter Ashmore and his wife, and recorded the death of the

latter, some eighteen years before. When she had looked at these, Ella opened the top of the parchment, without altogether unfolding it, but found still the same name of Walter Ashmore connected with those of several other persons, in regard to some property in South Carolina. She looked bewildered at the document for a moment ; and then raising her eyes to Mrs. Ashmore's face, she said, "I do not understand these papers, at all ; but from what I see, they seem to belong to you, madam, rather than to me ; and they are sealed too, I perceive, with a seal once belonging to your son, which was a present from you to my father."

"No—no. Dey're your own Missy Ella—dey're your own," cried Kitty.

"Hush, my good woman," said Mrs. Ashmore. "Will you let me see the papers, my dear?"

Ella gave them into her hands at once ; and the older lady, laying them down upon her knee, examined them one by one. The parchment, for a moment, she did not open fully, any more than Ella had done, but merely looked at the writing at the top, which she seemed to comprehend at once. Then turning with a kindly smile to Ella, she said, “Kitty is right. These all belong to you, my dear ; though I know not why your father should have thus inclosed them —especially this last deed, which is of no value, I believe. His only motive, indeed, could be—and that undoubtedly was a worthy one—to show you the distinguished families, both in England and the United States, from which you are descended.”

Ella’s heart began to beat so vehemently, that she feared she should faint again ; and all she could say was, “I do not understand. How do these papers affect me ?”

“Why, do you not know,” asked Mrs. Ashmore, “that you are the daughter of this Walter Ashmore and Ella D’Arcy, the daughter of that Colonel D’Arcy, who fought here for the crown of England, in the war of the revolution, and ravaged all the country round? He was a merciless soldier, but a gentleman, and the son of Earl D’Arcy’s brother.”

“I?” cried Ella; “Oh, no, no! I am the daughter of Israel Keelson, and none other. I would be none other, for all the rank and station in the world. My heart, my very spirit, tells me I am his, in blood, as well as in love.”

She bent down her head, and wept; but Kitty exclaimed, “Yes, yes, you be, Missy Ella. Him’s daughter, and Walter Ashmore’s too.”

Mrs. Ashmore moved gently round to

Ella's side, laying the papers on the table, and taking Ella's hand in hers, she said, " Israel Keelson and Walter Ashmore were one and the same person. A difference existed between your father and your grandfather for some years previous to the death of the latter, between whom and my husband's branch of the house, there also existed, as I have before said, a somewhat bitter feud. Your father offended his own parent greatly, while travelling in Europe, by marrying the orphan daughter of Colonel D'Arcy, who had shown himself such an enemy to this country. She had nothing but her noble blood, either, which was another offence ; for though your father did not know it at the time, your grandfather had completely ruined his property—encumbered it to the full extent of its value."

" Then what relation was my father to

you?" asked Ella, with her mind still confused.

" Your grandfather was my husband's uncle," replied Mrs. Ashmore, " and consequently your father was his first cousin. You yourself are now—since that fatal day —my late husband's nearest surviving relation."

" But how came my father," asked Ella, " to change his name and—"

" I will explain it all, in ten words," answered Mrs. Ashmore. " Your father, who lived upon a small pittance allowed him by his father, old Walter Ashmore, was summoned from Europe to attend him when he was dying; but he came only to find ruin, where he had expected prosperity. The mortgages had been foreclosed, and some bitter altercations took place between him and some other members of the family,

I believe. My husband, I am happy to say, took no part in it; for, poor man, he was on his death-bed at the time, and saw no one but Vohney, his agent, and myself. Walter Ashmore—that is your father—being a man of strong and decided mind, determined, it would seem, at once, to hide his poverty in some distant place, and gain his livelihood by his own hands. To conceal himself the better, he assumed another name. He had been famous, from his boyhood, for his skill in fishing; and I can just remember, when I was a little girl and we were all in our days of prosperity and affection, having been taken by him for a sail in the bay, in the beautiful boat which his father used to keep for him at Sullivan's Island. Aye, those were happy days," said Mrs. Ashmore, with a sigh.

"However," she continued, "your father,

as I learn from Kitty, who was the only servant he took with him, chose what had been the amusement of his boyhood, for the occupation of his age. But why he should have preserved this parchment, I do not understand; for it refers to a plantation long passed from his father to my husband, under a mortgage sale. The other papers are necessary to prove your birth, and family."

She then ceased, and Ella remained silent; but Kitty seemed about to speak, when Mrs. Ashmore rose, and approaching the table, added, "Let us see farther in regard to this deed. There may be something in the end;" and opening it out completely, a small piece of paper, in Keelson's writing, fell from it to the ground.

It was merely a very succinct account, addressed to his daughter, of the facts which

Mrs. Ashmore had already stated ; but at the end was written, "Preserve this deed, my child ; for, as you will see on reading it, my father declared, solemnly, on his death-bed, that he paid the whole money due upon the mortgages affecting this property, into the hands of that base knave, Volney, but that the receipt, promised to be sent that same afternoon, was delayed under pretence of Roger Ashmore's illness. The deed may be valueless to you, as it has been to me ; and my father's declaration, though the payment was witnessed, is of no effect in law, the witness not having heard the specific object for which the money was given ; but so long as you keep the deed, you will, I believe, keep up the claim."

Ella read the paper, and then handed it to Mrs. Ashmore, who, at the last words, turned pale. "He *is* a base knave," she

said after a pause, “ and most likely has pocketed the money without accounting for it. This is the meaning, Kitty,” she continued, “ of the sort of vague threats which he held out to me, through you, after having insulted me by fancying that I would marry, in my old age, a cunning, low-born, fellow like himself. Let me see what the deed says;” and turning to the end she read aloud a few words, written in a very different hand from that in which the document was engrossed, to the following effect :

“ *Memorandum.—I, Walter Ashmore, did pay to Richard Volney, agent of Mr. Roger Ashmore, on the third of this month of August, in the year of our Lord 17—, the sum of sixty-five thousand dollars, being satisfaction in full, of the sum borrowed by me on mortgage on the property described*

within, with lawful interest for the same up to the said third of August, in the presence of Simon Hickman, who testifies below. I make this memorandum, as I feel seriously ill, and because the said Volney, whom I know to be a knave, after having promised to send me a receipt signed by Mr. Roger Ashmore, the same evening, has put me off with excuses for the last week, on account of my nephew's alleged illness.

(Signed)

“ WALTER ASHMORE.”

Underneath was written a memorandum, to the effect that the payment of sixty-five thousand dollars, to Mr. Volney, had been made in the presence of Simon Hickman, but without one word to show, on the part of the witness, any knowledge of the object of the payment.

All this, Mrs. Ashmore read aloud, and her proud lip, for a moment, curled with a good deal of scorn. "Ha," she said, at first, "so this, I suppose, is the foundation of Volney's past fortune and his present presumption. Doubtless he has pocketed the money. And yet, my husband was not a man to be so deceived.—Stay—stay—I remember quite well, that in the executorial account there was the sum, in ready money, of sixty-five thousand dollars, detached from all other sums, and without the source from whence it proceeded being stated. They bought the Greenfield plantation with it. Here Margaret—Johanna—one of you—run up to the closet behind my bed-room, and bring me down the tin case standing there—the small one—the small one, with white letters upon it."

Mistress Ashmore had gone out of the

room to the head of the stairs, to give these orders, and Kitty took advantage of her absence to nod her head kindly at Ella, saying, “ All goin right, Missy, my dear bird—all goin right. Tings come round—pend upon it.”

Mrs. Ashmore, when she entered, stood silent at the table, looking neither at Ella nor at Kitty ; and at the end of about two minutes, a fat negro girl, with a brilliant bandanna handkerchief twisted around her head, brought down a small tin case, not much larger than a cash-box, and placed it on the table.

“ Come hither, my dear,” said Mrs. Ashmore to Ella, opening the box with a key attached to her watch chain. “ These are the papers I found in my husband’s bed-room, after his death. I had not the heart to examine them at that time, and put

them in here, where they have remained forgotten ever since. He was a man of very regular habits, in matters of business ; and there may be something here which will explain all this. Come here and see—I have nothing to conceal.”

Ella advanced to the table, and Mrs, Ashmore took out one or two of the papers, examined them with a very grave face, and laid them down. At length, however, she came to an old memorandum book, opened it, and ran over the leaves till an entry appeared, dated third of August 17—, in the following words : “ Volney received sixty-five thousand dollars from my uncle Walter, in discharge of mortgage and interest. Ordered him to pay it into bank, to draw up a receipt for my signature, and to have satisfaction piece prepared.”

Underneath was written, in blacker ink,

“ See bank book, sixty-five thousand dollars paid in by Volney.”

Mrs. Ashmore threw her arms round Ella, saying earnestly, “ You and your poor father have been very much wronged, my child ; but you see it has neither been by my husband’s or my own act ; and to the utmost, I will make you what amends can now be made.”

Almost at the same moment the black girl, who had brought in the box, re-entered the room, and said, “ Massa Volney below, Maum. I show him in little parlor.”

“ Let him wait,” said Mrs. Ashmore. “ I will go to him soon.”

“ Simon Hickman below,” said Kitty, eagerly, but in a low tone—“ he dat see de money paid—Simon Hickman, de half-breed.—He can tell you much more of Master Volney.”

“ Ah !” said Mrs. 'Ashmore—“ then we will convict him. Bring the man Simon into the great parlour, Kitty. You, Ella, my child, wait here, till you hear me calling. Then come down at once.”

CHAPTER X.

As thistles wear the softest down,
To hide their prickles till they're grown,
And then declare themselves, and tear
Whatever ventures to come near,
So a smooth knave does greater feats,
Than one that idly rails and threats.

BUTLER.

WE must leave Ella to meditate in solitude over all that had happened—no! not to meditate—not even to think—it was but to feel—to feel that a barrier was broken down between her and happiness; that the dark circle of fate, which had seemed to close her in on every side, had disappeared, as one of those mists which surround a tra-

veller wandering in mountain regions, is dispelled when the sun rises to his meridian, leaving scattered clouds, confusing all the distant objects, but the ground on which he stands, clear, and bright, and beautiful. Every thing beyond the point of happiness at which she found herself was vague and indistinct, whirling, and, as it were, fanciful —hardly to be comprehended, hardly to be understood. But that point was all joy ; the full light shone upon it, with one of the sun-bursts which, rare and far apart, checker the cloudy day of life.

In the mean time, Mrs. Ashmore descended the stairs, close upon the steps of Kitty, and entered the large room into which Ella had been taken on her first arrival. A minute more, and Simon was in her presence, the doors closed, and nobody but Kitty, as a witness and participator in the conversation

that ensued. The interview was not without its interest, and was very characteristic of all the parties. But we are hurrying to the close of this tale, and must not pause upon such particulars, as all the information derived from Simon Hickman will necessarily appear in an after conversation.

At the end of about twenty minutes, Mrs. Ashmore reopened the door and walked into a smaller room opposite, while Simon and Kitty remained behind, ready to attend her call if necessary. The worthy lady's heart was beating, but with no emotions of timidity or doubt. Hers was not a spirit to shrink or quail. She smoothed her aspect, however, assumed a sort of forced smile, and greeted Mr. Volney pleasantly.

“I have been somewhat engaged, Mr. Volney, and have to apologize for keeping you waiting,” she said, in a more conciliatory

tone than she had lately employed towards the agent. "Some rather curious and unpleasant things have occurred."

"Oh, I can guess, my dear madam — I can guess," replied Mr. Volney, taking the chair to which Mrs. Ashmore pointed. "I have seen a young woman myself this morning, who did not think fit to tell her real business; but I can divine who she is, and what brought her; for she had got that vagabond Simon Hickman, the half-breed, in the carriage with her, trying to hide himself. He was young Walter Ashmore's servant for a long time in Europe, you know, till that person could not afford to keep a man any longer, and then he was sent back to old Walter, who kept him about his house till his death. Now I warrant you this is Walter's daughter, and she has come to declare, from some papers she has got of her

father's, that the mortgage was paid off, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. That's a stale trick. It was tried a long time ago by Walter himself; but I managed him, I managed him; and would manage him again, or his daughter either — although," he added, in a low and confidential sort of tone, "she might make something of it, and get up a very troublesome suit, if the matter were not very properly handled. It was on that account, my dear madam, that I ventured to presume to be so bold, as to suggest that a union of interests and exertions—"

Mrs. Ashmore waved her hand imperatively, and replied somewhat sternly. " You mistake me, Mr. Volney. You have indeed comprehended the object of this young woman; but I wish most decidedly to know whether I shall be right in peremptorily re-

jecting her claim — whether there is any ground for it?"

"None in the world, my dear madam," replied Mr. Volney, who was rather troubled with a double game and two distinct objects. "She might trouble you a great deal. She might even — for law is uncertain, unless rightly handled—"

Mrs. Ashmore waved her hand again.

"Then the mortgage money was positively not paid to Mr. Ashmore?" she said.

"I call Heaven to witness—" exclaimed Mr. Volney, who could be sanctimonious at times.

But Mrs. Ashmore could bear no more. The warm Southern blood rushed from her heart to her cheek, and she exclaimed in a loud, sharp voice, "Hush! — Heaven has been witness to too much, villain! How dare you sit there before me, and say that

the money was not paid, when I find a memorandum in my husband's own hand, not only of its payment to you, but of his orders to give a receipt, and to have a satisfaction piece prepared — when the payment is recorded in the bank book — when there are witnesses to prove the payment of the very sum. Out upon you, knave ! I understand you now, to the heart. You concealed all this, to have a hold upon me, fancying I was as base as yourself. You sent the black woman here to insinuate you had power over my fortune, and could make me a beggar, if I did not marry a low plebeian knave, the son of a French usurer. But you are mistaken, man, you are mistaken ; I would do justice if it cost me all I had. Ella—Ella—Ella, my dear ! Come down—come down and see this pale scoundrel trembling."

" My dear madam—I beseech you !—I

entreat you, listen to reason ! You do not consider," cried Mr. Volney, in a tone of the utmost alarm and agitation. " The whole Greenfield estate, now the best you possess !—and interest on the money—the back rents !—The memorandum may be a forgery."

" Ella ! Ella !" continued Mrs. Ashmore, calling from the door. " Forgery ! What ! of a paper found by me in my husband's room, at his death, and never out of my possession since ?"

At that moment, Ella entered the room ; and both Kitty and the half-breed looked in at the door. Mr. Volney seemed to gather himself up, as if for some determined act, and stood before them, raised to his full height, with his arms folded on his chest, but winking his eyes even more rapidly than usual, and with a nervous trembling of the

twitching lip, which betrayed more inward agitation than he would have wished to show.

“ Before you utter a word, madam,” he exclaimed, addressing Mrs. Ashmore, as soon as Ella entered, “ let me remind you that, by your own confession, you have been a party to all that has taken place. You say you found the paper in the room where your husband died, setting forth such and such facts, of which I know nothing.”

“ Hold thy peace, knave !” cried Mrs. Ashmore, with her eyes flashing ; “ for my actions, I will be answerable to God, to this dear child, and to the whole world. So help me Heaven at my utmost need, as I never looked at one of the papers in that box till the information brought me by this poor girl recalled it to my mind ! But now answer one other thing, and answer truly ; for I have learned more than you imagine. Where

is this girl's father? He has disappeared!
—where is he, I say?"

"I know nothing about him," answered Volney. "Nothing of my own knowledge; he became a fisherman, they say, and was killed in some sort of riot."

"Who told you that?" asked Mrs. Ashmore, in a voice of thunder. "Who killed him? Was it not your nephew, Sparhawk, that twice-tried pirate? Was it not he who did both commit the deed, and tell his loving uncle? The conversation was overheard, man—at least a part of it—a part well nigh sufficient to send you, too, to the gallows. Oh, I understand it all now—you wanted the papers, did you?—you wanted all the evidence in your own hands, to work upon my fears? Fool, fool! have you known me for thirty years, and not known better? Go down for a magistrate, Simon.

I will have this business probed to the bottom, and at least insure the arrest of that murderous villain, Sparhawk, who you say was hovering about the coast not a week ago."

Simon darted away, and Mr. Volney moved quietly towards the door.

"Call in the servants, Kitty," cried Mrs. Ashmore. "He shall not go."

"You have no warrant to detain me," said Mr. Volney in a quiet tone, though his face was deadly pale. "Take care what you do, madam. You have already given good grounds for an action against you for slander. If you choose to detain me by force, do it—do it! I have not the least objection. But it must be by force, to make the action lie. For all the calumnies you have uttered against me, may the Lord in his mercy forgive you!"

“ And may he punish you as you deserve,” said Mrs. Ashmore. “ I desire nothing better. But go—go. I will not break the law myself. I will have you well watched, though.”

Mr. Volney walked calmly enough out of the room; and Mrs. Ashmore following, gave some directions to the servants. On her return, she seated herself by Ella, but remained silent for several minutes, endeavouring, apparently, to recover her composure after the burst of indignant passion to which she had given way.

“ Now, my dear,” she said at length, “ come and let us have some fruit, and during this afternoon you shall tell me all that has occurred to you since your father’s death. You have no mother, my poor child ; but I will be a mother to you, and though sometimes hot and passionate enough, as

you must have seen just now, I can be a kind and indulgent mother to a gentle thing like you. It has pleased God, in his mysterious providence, that my own dear child should be taken from me. I cannot do better than make a child of poor Walter's."

Though so different in many respects from any one she had ever seen before, Ella had already discovered a generous, warm-hearted candour in Mrs. Ashmore's character, which won her heart and her confidence. She told her all ; with a frankness and minuteness that she could not have conceived possible towards any one, some days before. The effect was somewhat different in minute points from that which Ella might have anticipated. Though Mrs. Ashmore sympathized with, and felt for Ella much, she seemed to enter into—nay, to share the prejudices—if we must call them so—of Adrian

Brewerton to the fullest extent ; and yet she praised highly his young wife's conduct in leaving him, when she fancied herself the daughter of Israel Keelson, the New England fisherman, declaring it the only course to be pursued in such delicate and painful circumstances.

“ You know he is of the same family with ourselves,” said Mrs. Ashmore. “ A fourth cousin by the father's side, and descended from a noble family in England. But all difficulties—all obstructions to your happiness—are removed now, my child. Your duty is, to fly to your husband, as soon as you have had time for repose, and some of my servants shall accompany you. I must remain for a while, to unravel this affair with the knave Volney ; but I will follow you as soon as circumstances will permit me to

leave this state, and you and your Adrian shall be my children."

So was it arranged, and like few other plans, the scheme was executed, at least up to a certain point.

CHAPTER XI.

Now sits expectation in the air,
And hides a sword.

SHAKESPEARE. "*Henry V.*"

WHILE the events which we have just recorded were passing in a far distant part of the country, Charles Selden was the only visitor who presumed to intrude upon Adrian's melancholy mansion ; nor, indeed, would any other person have been received. A change had certainly come over Adrian, since his conversation on the hill side. He had now hope ; and his mind was at one with itself on a subject which before he had almost dreaded to think of. But still there

was the melancholy of impatience and uncertainty ; and he could not have borne the society of ordinary and indifferent persons.

Charles Selden's presence, however, seemed always a relief to his friend, if nothing more ; and though the name of Ella, by a sort of tacit understanding between them, was rarely if ever mentioned, yet Adrian was easily persuaded to wait for a reasonable time after the period at which his last letter could reach Baltimore, before he took any further steps to recall his beloved wife to the home she had left desolate. Continually, however, he tormented himself, not alone with unavailing and selfish regrets for her absence, but with fears also for her safety, and painful imaginings of all the possible evils that might befall her, and all the anguish she might suffer.

Nevertheless, Charles Selden's frequent

visits were a relief, as we have said, although there was something of the positive, practical character of the young physician, so entirely out of harmony with the morbid sensitiveness which characterized Adrian, especially at this period, that there grew up between them, we must not say an estrangement, but a reserve. Adrian hesitated to communicate to his friend all the miserable feelings that overwhelmed him—the fears—the self-reproach—the occasional fits of despair. Charles Selden, on his part, refrained through delicacy from seeking a confidence which was withheld from him on motives which, however incorrectly applied, he perfectly understood.

There was something strange about Charles Selden too, at this time. His visits were never of long duration, though often repeated; and he was full of whims—

Adrian sometimes thought affectedly so, although he was not one to attribute bad motives, and fancied that his companion's object might be to divert his thoughts from himself. Occasionally Selden would quarrel with his dinner, declare that the fowl upon the table must be the progenitor of all fowls, or that the butcher must have mistaken a horse for an ox when he slaughtered the beef. He complained bitterly of our friend the stage-driver, asserted that his vehicle must have been formed with the express intention of furnishing surgical cases to the hospital, and was therefore very unfit for a surgeon to enter. A world of other grumbling did he make, and that in a serious tone, though with somewhat trite jocularity. Indeed his manner was never gay, or even cheerful, although there was a certain sort of bright eagerness about it, which Adrian

tolerated better than he could have borne merriment. He generally remained but one night, and returned to town on the following morning, and one piece of whimsicality he always showed. He had a strange fancy—in regard to which Adrian neither offered opposition or asked for explanation—never to sleep twice in the same room; and a little sort of folding-bed, which had been bought for Ruth, was moved about from chamber to chamber to suit his caprice, much to the annoyance of the old gardener who grumbled excessively at what he called “the maggots of Mr. Selden.”

Adrian might have wondered at this singular freak had it not been one of many, although his mind, indeed, was not in a condition to interest itself about trifles. As it was, he merely ordered the gardener to follow Mr. Selden’s wishes, and thought no

more about it. The only thing which Adrian remarked particularly, was, that on the morning of each departure, Charles appeared peculiarly dull and thoughtful ; and the young husband, with his mind full of Ella, could not help fancying that his friend, each time he came, expected to find her returned.

One morning, when time had run on till expectation had become an anguish, the two friends were seated at breakfast : Adrian silent and thoughtful, and Charles with more than he had lately shown of that quiet cheerfulness which had been common to him in earlier days, and which became him much better than his more boisterous moods. Ever since misfortune had befallen Adrian, Charles had displayed towards him, except when affected by one of the whims we have just mentioned, a peculiar tender-

ness—a tenderness in the tones of the voice and in the expression of the countenance, which seemed to imply a conviction that his sympathy would be more acceptable to his friend in that form than if shaped into words. On the present occasion, however, there was a perceptible change in his manner. It was kind and quiet; but when he spoke, which was not frequently—for he seemed much taken up with reflections of his own—there was a peculiar tone of earnest confidence in his voice; and for the first time, he alluded frankly to his own caprices in regard to his sleeping room.

“Upon my word, Adrian,” he said, after a long silence, “I believe I am a great deal better acquainted with your house than you are yourself. You are like one of those Italian princes who, moved by poverty, confine themselves to one poor corner of their

ancestral palaces, and let out the rest to strangers. There is this difference, indeed : they take to their garrets from necessity ; you shut yourself up in your state apartments from choice. But at all events, I cannot help wondering that you have so little curiosity about your own property. Now, I will venture to say you have never been inside one half of the rooms in your own house."

"I plead guilty," replied Adrian in an indifferent tone. "I recollect having once determined to make a regular voyage of discovery through the old place, and to have every thing put in repair—but other circumstances intervened," he added, with a deep sigh, "and it was never done."

"Well, well," answered Charles Selden ; "you have not lost much by the omission of the visit. At least, you would have

been sadly disappointed if you had any expectation of accidentally coming upon elegant chambers, or quaint decorations. The original proprietor seems to have exhausted both his ambition and his genius for display upon that famous fresco, which, in its prime, must have been the glory of the province.”

“ I dare say it was,” answered Adrian ; and fell into thought again.

The conversation dropped there, and soon after Charles Selden rose to go. “ I fear,” he said as they parted, “ that I shall not be able to visit you again for several days. I have business in town which will confine me amongst houses and colleges, I cannot say how long. I always come, you know, my dear Adrian, like a thief in the night ; and I will return whenever I can, or at any hour—determined to fancy myself welcome, whether I am so or not.”

Adrian pressed his friend's hand warmly, but did not speak ; and the young physician set out on his homeward journey at a rapid pace. He continued for a short time to pursue the path towards the high road to the town ; but suddenly, when some way over the hills, he turned to the left and took the direction of the bay. It was still what we should now call early in the morning when he reached the little cluster of fishermen's huts, and advancing to the one occupied by Ben. Herring, knocked sharply at the door.

The master of the house was out ; but his wife said, as the weather threatened a storm he had not gone to sea, and would probably be found upon the beach with the other men mending their nets. There, and in that occupation, Charles Selden found him.

“ I am glad to see you, my good friend,” said Selden, shaking him by the hand. “ I should like to have a few minutes’ private conversation with you, if you can spare the time.”

Thus saying, he drew him to a little distance from the rest, exciting some curiosity amongst the other fishermen, most of whom recognized him, although he had no recollection of any of them.

“ It must be something about old Keelson’s affairs,” whispered one to another. “ That is the gentleman who came down with Mr. Brewerton on the night of the murder.”

A few more observations of the same kind passed, and they resumed their work again.

In the mean while Charles Selden and Herring had walked up and down the beach at some little distance, in very earnest con-

versation. At length Herring replied to something which the other had said, “ I have not seen her myself; but one of us—who was not at home that same night, and has been a good deal away lately, deep-sea fishing—tells me that he has noticed a suspicious-looking craft upon the coast—I think he said twice. By his account of her, it ought to be the same; a long, black-looking devil sitting close to the water, very rakishly rigged, and with spars so fine you would think they would stand nothing at all. She was backing and filling as if coming up the harbour, but presently she put about again, and stood out to sea. She has never come in, that’s certain, or you would have heard of it long ago, as I promised. I have had a sharp look-out kept night and day.”

Charles Selden mused for a moment in silence, and then said, as if speaking to him-

self, "It is as I thought."—"Listen to me, Herring," he continued. "You are a man I can trust; but I am a little afraid of the indiscretion of your companions. The least appearance of unusual precaution, or watching, would spoil all. This villain, Sparhawk, will return, and that probably ere long—he must return—of that I feel assured. I will make arrangements immediately to have a watch placed at the light-house, in order that intelligence may be conveyed to me the moment he approaches the coast. Now it will be easy for the messenger, whom I will station there, to pass by your house on his way to the town. We must guard against the news, however, spreading to others; and I will direct the man to leave merely a card with my name written upon it, at your door, which will be a signal for you to come up to consult with me on the next step, without a

moment's loss of time. Only be very cautious, and let not a word of our plans escape to your companions. I know that your friendship for the poor old man will not permit you to hesitate in aiding my efforts to bring his cowardly murderer to punishment ; and for your loss of time, I will see that you have compensation."

" No, sir ! no !" replied Herring. " I do not want to be paid for doing my duty. Besides, I owed a good deal to poor Mr. Keelson, and have plenty of motives, without the hope of gain, to make me stand by you in this matter. Make your mind easy ; I will not say a word to any one till it is needful, and rest assured, that whenever you see your messenger, I shall not be very far behind him. A stout arm can row a boat almost as fast as an ordinary horse can travel."

After a few words more, and another warning to be cautious, Charles Selden shook his companion by the hand, and walked away rapidly along the shore, in the direction of the light-house. There he seemed to meet with no great satisfaction ; for there was some disappointment in his face when he turned his steps towards the town, and upon his arrival, instead of proceeding to his chambers, he went at once in quest of the authorities. It was a long time before he could find any of the superior functionaries, their only *locum tenens* in the police department, for the moment, being a red-faced citizen, who united to the employment of guardian of the public peace, the more profitable calling of the hammer and last.

At length, however, his honour the mayor appeared—a worthy gentleman, of no great force of character, who had probably been

elevated to his high civic functions rather on account of what he had not done, than what he had. In more recent times, negative qualifications have sometimes led to even higher offices. To him Charles Selden proceeded to state at once the business which had brought him thither.

“Doubtless, sir,” he said, “all the circumstances attending the murder of the poor fisherman, Israel Keelson, are fresh in your mind; and you will recollect, that in a private interview I had with you after my examination, I stated that the murderer had set a trap for himself in which he might yet be caught, although he unfortunately escaped for the time, notwithstanding the reward offered for his apprehension.”

“I remember — I remember perfectly well,” replied the mayor. “You were somewhat mysterious, my dear sir; but as I

make no pretensions to be a resolver of riddles, I left time to develop what you hinted at: but as to the trap, have you found it out? If you have, I hope it is well baited, for depend upon it this is an old bird, and will not be taken with chaff."

"I have at least made a discovery of some importance, which I have come to communicate to your honour without a moment's delay," replied Charles Selden. "You may remember that in my evidence before the coroner, I gave a somewhat lengthy detail of the circumstances which had brought myself and my friend Adrian Brewerton to the scene of the murder at the very time it took place — how, while chatting together late at night, we had been startled by noises in Brewerton's house — how we had discovered two men therein, who were proved to belong to the band of smugglers, or

pirates, who committed the outrage, and how we pursued them actually into Keelson's cottage. No doubt remained upon my mind that these two men had come to remove some of their plunder, or their smuggled goods, from a place in which they deposited it, and that they were surprised by us before they had effected their object — though, as the hour was late, they doubtless supposed that the whole of Adrian's little household had retired to rest. I resolved to do all in my power to discover their hiding-place, and have never ceased my efforts. Now the house is a large, old, rambling house, full of unnecessary staircases and passages without object, and has never been above one-third inhabited since my friend bought it. Thus I have had many difficulties, and have been forced to assume a strange sort of caprice and whimsicality of conduct, which no one

would have tolerated but such a man as Brewerton, changing my room continually without apparent cause, and playing a thousand tricks of the same kind to accomplish my purpose, without letting any one know what I was about."

The mayor took out his watch, thinking of various comforts and conveniences in his own home, and Charles Selden proceeded, saying, "I will not detain you farther with any long details. Suffice it, that I have at length discovered a sort of lumber-room, which for a long time escaped my attention, communicating, by a concealed door, with a long passage and a back staircase, and I have no earthly doubt that this is—"

"The trap—the trap!" said the mayor.

"Exactly," replied Charles Selden. "This large, old, rambling house had been unoccupied for many years when it was pur-

chased by the present proprietor. It stands, isolated from any other dwelling, at a convenient distance from the coast, which is reached by a dreary road very rarely travelled, and it is quite clear that these scoundrels have been, for years, in the habit of making it a place of deposit for their most valuable goods, being, I have not the slightest doubt, in strict alliance with an old villain who used to hang about the place, and whom my friend has lately taken into his service as gardener."

"But the bait!—the bait!" cried the mayor. "You may have found the trap, but if it be unbaited, depend upon it the rats will not come near it."

"I have found the bait too," answered Charles Selden. "The large open fire-place in the room which I have mentioned, was covered over with a well-fitting wooden fire-

board. This fire-board, after searching every other part of the room, I removed, and found behind it two small chests, or boxes, made of some hard Spanish wood, and hoop-ed with iron."

"What did they contain?" asked the mayor. "They may be merely some articles left behind by the former proprietor."

"I think not," replied Charles Selden. "They are by no means very antique in their appearance, and, for their size, are exceedingly weighty, chinking too with a metallic sound when they are moved. It is true I did not open them; for I conceived that to do so would require the strong key of the law in your honour's possession; but I feel quite sure that no one would think of packing up old iron or old copper in two such very secure receptacles; and, in short, am convinced that they contain, if not coin, articles of very great value."

“ Right—right !” said the mayor. “ I think you are quite right. But what is it you wish me to do ? To go and examine these boxes ?”

“ By no means, at present,” answered Selden. “ The old gardener, if he be what I suspect, would take care to warn his confederates. I myself restored every thing in the room to the precise condition in which I found it, in the hope that these boxes may prove a bait, as your honour wittily terms it. The leader of these men I know to be as bold as he is unscrupulous : I have ascertained that his vessel has been recently hovering upon the coast ; and I am quite sure that he will not abandon these goods, without making an effort to carry them off, as soon as he thinks he can do so in safety. The very danger of the enterprise will probably be an inducement to him to be present

himself; and with proper aid I will undertake to capture him. It would take up too much of your valuable time to watch as I will watch."

"The truth is, I am exceedingly busy at present," said the mayor, "and could hardly give the matter the attention it deserves. What have you to propose, my young friend?"

"The first thing I wish is to station two men in the light-house at the mouth of the harbour," replied Charles Selden. "I will provide them with a glass, and pay all their expenses, as well as furnish them with a horse, in order to convey any intelligence rapidly. But the people at the light-house made some difficulties, as I spoke to them without authority; and what I have first to ask, is, that your honour will procure me the necessary permission from the federal

authorities to place the men in the light-house, as you will at once see that it is absolutely necessary we should be instantly informed of the arrival of the murderer in these waters. All that I have further to request, is, that you will detail four of your best officers to be at my orders whenever I call upon them ; and if I do not capture this man, he will either capture or kill me. I have, indeed, to beg that you will excuse me for presuming so far to trench upon the peculiar privileges of your office ; but the circumstances will, I am convinced, justify both your honour in granting my request, and me in making it.”

The mayor loved not night expeditions—did not feel at all bound to capture pirates with his own hands—had no officers of peculiarly great strategetic powers—had much reverence for Charles Selden’s abili-

ties in that sort ; and however much he might respect persons who had a call to encounter death and wounds in a good cause, preferred his fire-side and his easy chair, to onerous responsibilities, and perilous enterprises. As society was constituted at that time, he might have found himself in some sort bound to do something towards the capture of the pirates in his own person, if he had not found a volunteer deputy ; but under the circumstances, he contented himself with a few formal objections, easily removed, and then acceded to all that Charles Selden wished. “ I must make you a constable for the nonce,” he said, laughing, “ and then I can invest you with plenary power over the men. But will four be enough ? ”

“ Quite,” replied Charles Selden. “ I shall make five : we will go well armed, and I have also a little plan of ambuscade.”

Thus all was arranged: permission was readily obtained from the federal authorities to place watchers at the light-house; four resolute men were warned to be in readiness at a moment's warning, and to put themselves under Charles Selden's orders whenever called upon, and several other minor matters were settled, to ensure success to his undertaking.

The murder of old Keelson had produced a deep and lasting impression in the little town. Such crimes were happily then of rare occurrence, and all felt anxious for the punishment of the offenders. Selden had reason to believe that this anxiety was shared by the men placed under his command; he knew that he could confide in their courage, and he placed some reliance on the fact that a reward, large for the times, had been offered for the arrest of Keelson's murderer,

the chance of participating in which would, he felt confident, be no slight incentive to exertion with his four subordinates.

A week elapsed after Selden's interview with the mayor; and during all that time the young physician had not returned to visit his friend, who was still completely ignorant of his suspicions, and the preparations he had made. No farther intelligence was received of the piratical vessel; and Charles Selden was beginning to think he had been deceived, when one evening, just as day was closing, with a dense sea fog rolling up over the town, he was startled from the perusal of some medical treatise by a heavy step approaching the door of his chamber. Immediately after, a loud, impatient knock echoed through the silent building, and the next moment one of his messengers from the light-house stood before him.

“ She’s come at last ! ” exclaimed the man, who had evidently ridden hard. “ She’s standing inshore, a little to the northward of the point. There was a thick fog all the afternoon ; but a sudden gust blew it off for a moment, and I got a glimpse of her black hull and rakish masts, about which there’s no mistake.” He was proceeding with his account, when Ben Herring, the fisherman, entered the room without ceremony. All were too eager to speak much, so that the consultation, if it could so be called, in which Charles Selden took upon him to direct, was very brief.

“ The villain will not land inside the bay,” said Charles to Herring, after asking a few questions of the messenger. “ He is too shrewd a rogue for that. You had better run down at once to the light-house, demand admission in my name, and watch

the movements of the pirates. Should they land, as I expect, beyond the point to the east, remain perfectly quiet till they are ashore, and have left their boats. Then collect the largest force you can, and cut off their retreat, if they escape towards the sea. But be careful that all is done with as little noise and confusion as possible."

" He'll not be able to see them from the light-house," said the messenger. " By this time it's as thick as chowder."

" Never you mind," replied Herring, " I'll find a way to see them, depend upon it ;" and away he went, never questioning Charles Selden's authority to command him, and determined to perform well the duty assigned him, although he was not apparently altogether satisfied with so subordinate a part.

The messenger was immediately sent to

direct the four men who were to accompany the young physician, to meet him in fifteen minutes, at a point a little beyond the limits of the town ; and Charles Selden, arming himself with a brace of loaded pistols and a stout stick, or rather club, drew a great-coat over all, and hurried away to the only place in the town where carriages were to be procured. He slackened his pace after a little time, indeed, not to draw attention to himself, although hurry might be reasonably excused in a physician.

At the stables he ordered a pair of horses to be harnessed to a four-seated vehicle standing near, which was provided with leather curtains, destined to serve in his case as protection against curiosity instead of the weather. Declining the services of a driver, he mounted the box himself, and drove off in the direction of the place of rendezvous.

He was the first on the ground, however. The messenger had not found the men together. They had to be sought for, each at his own particular place of business ; for none of them confined themselves exclusively to the service of the State ; and when they had been successively summoned, it required no little time for each to prepare and arm himself, although they had been directed to be ready at a moment's warning.

In this way an hour was lost before the whole party had assembled at the place of meeting ; and Charles Selden, cool and collected as he usually was, had grown exceedingly impatient, and even nervous, before the last of the men came up. Then, however, all was alacrity : the carriage received its burden : one of the officers took the reins after Charles had given his directions, and all five started together on the way towards

the old house. There was but little conversation on the road, though in few words Charles explained to his companions as much of his plan as he thought necessary. But the way was long, the road rough and difficult, and, in the darkness, the time seemed interminable before they reached an old deserted barn which had been attached to a farm-house, burned about a year and a half before, whence their journey was to be continued on foot. It stood on the left of the road, just on the western brow of some hilly ground which intervened between the highway and Adrian's house ; and here the carriage was driven directly into the barn, and the horses taken out and secured.

Rapidly but quietly, the little band traversed the hills and descended into the valley where the old house stood. The fog was not so thick here as in the town ; but it

was sufficient to afford some concealment ; and one by one the men glided unperceived into the grass-grown court at the back of the building, where they stopped for a moment to reconnoitre. There was no light to be seen, excepting a faint gleam from the kitchen window. They listened, but there was no sound ; all was silent in that dull chilly night.

The leader of the party determined to omit no precaution, however ; and directing his companions, in a whisper, to take off their shoes, and follow him in a moment, he opened the door, and entered the kitchen as noiselessly as possible.

A lighted lantern was burning dimly on the table, and old Palham, the gardener, was faintly seen, in the partial obscurity, seated in a distant corner, dozing in a chair. He woke up instantly, however, saying, with

the fumes of sleep still in his head, “ All right, my mates. He’s been in bed this half hour.”

The next instant he turned deadly pale as he beheld Charles, and he faltered forth, “ Ah, Mr. Selden! is that you?”

The young physician walked rapidly but quietly up to him, laid his hand upon his collar, and put a cocked pistol to his head.

“ Not a word,” he said, in a low tone, “ or you are a dead man!”

By this time the four officers were in the room; and Palham, trembling like an aspen leaf, did the wisest thing possible in the circumstances, and remained profoundly silent.

“ I know all,” said Charles, “ so place yourself between two of these constables—one before, and the other after—and follow me up the little staircase to the great corridor, on the second floor.”

'The man looked towards the lantern ; but Charles nodded to him, with a significant smile, saying, " We shall not need it—I am provided. We will leave that for the friends you expected. Take off his shoes."

While the officers were employed as he directed, Charles drew a dark lantern from his pocket, lighted it at that which stood on the table, and led the way up to the kitchen staircase, with a perfect knowledge of all the turnings and windings of the house.

All was clear and silent ; but each man carried a pistol in his hand, although Charles Selden had gathered from the gardener's first exclamation, that, according to his wish, he had arrived before the pirates. When they had reached the corridor above, he opened the door of one of the rooms in which he had slept, and pushed Palham in, saying, " There !—stay you there. I know

that there is no other door, so if you want to escape you must jump out of the window—and I fancy that you value your precious neck too much for that. Here there is luckily both a lock and key."

Having made the door fast, he led the way, in the same quiet manner, nearly to the end of the corridor, where, in front, there was a large window looking upon the trees before the house, and on the right hand, a stout upright or post of oak, near which the young gentleman stopped. Thrusting his fingers into a crack behind the post, he suddenly pulled back a door, turning the light of his lantern into the room, not yet quite assured that there might not be persons concealed there.

But the chamber was vacant of any living thing ; and all that it now presented to the eye, at the first glance, was a quantity of

old and damaged furniture, broken chairs and tables, a long-silent spinning wheel, and the cradle of a child, who had probably long before grown up to manhood, or passed into the quiet grave.

A tallow candle, however, now extinguished, but which had burned low in the socket of a brass candlestick, seemed to show that somebody had been there lately —certainly since Charles had last visited the room. A new doubt sprang up in his mind, notwithstanding the half sleeping words of old Palham ; and walking to the fire-place, he drew back the board ; but the two iron-bound chests were still there, precisely as he had left them. He then put the board up in its place again, and proceeded to station his men on the right and left of the door, concealing them as well as he could behind the various pieces

of old furniture with which the room abounded.

A silent pause succeeded, during which, it were vain to tell the reader, there were no beating hearts within that chamber, brave as was every man there present.

CHAPTER XII.

Queen. What, must we part already?

Ulysses. For a moment,

Like waves divided by the gliding bark,
That meet again, and mingle as before.

ROWE. “*Ulysses.*”

IT was about half-past eleven o'clock at night, and Adrian Brewerton was in bed, but not asleep; for sleep had become very strange to him; and yet he had retired to rest earlier for some weeks than usual. It was not from lassitude of body; for he was strong and vigorous as ever. It was not from lassitude of mind; for thought was protracted for many hours after he laid his

head upon the pillow. It was rather that he might think more profoundly. Before night actually came, he was tired of the light: the objects around him seemed to distract his attention from those subjects on which he desired to fix it: he wished to shut out all things but the image of Ella.

He lay there, in deep meditation, with his arm under his head, and a flint and steel by the bed-side, with which, when reflection became too painful, as was sometimes the case, he would strike a light, and try to read himself to sleep. That night was an exceedingly quiet one: the heavy fog seemed to have stilled all sounds — even the insect voices, so garrulous during the darkness in America, were hushed. No wind even whispered through the branches of the trees; and the heavy fall of the waves upon the beach, often heard when a gale was blowing, was silent now.

Suddenly, Adrian thought he heard a slight noise coming from the eastern side of the house, but not within it ; a noise as if quick but cautious foot-falls were passing into the garden. Then again all was still near the house ; but from a considerable distance on the other side, towards the high road, and in the direction of the bye-way, which afforded the only means of communication for cart or waggon with the town, came a sound as if of rolling wheels, to which Adrian, with his attention now roused, listened for a moment or two.

“ It must be on the high road,” he thought. “ In stilly nights like this, one hears an immense distance,”

He was turning to other thoughts again, when the nearer noises were renewed. They seemed now actually in the house — foot-steps, and even a murmur, as if of voices.

Adrian started up: "I will put an end to this," he said; and striking a light, he partly dressed himself, listening from time to time. For a few moments he heard the footsteps distinctly, apparently walking directly overhead. But the murmur of voices had ceased. In a moment more, all was quiet again; but Adrian approached a bureau, and took out a brace of pistols, which he had lately bought, loaded them carefully, and tying a silk handkerchief round his waist, thrust them into it as a sort of belt.

"Those who have gone up must come down," he said to himself; "and this time they shall not escape." He then took up the light, issued forth from his room, and descended the great staircase.

Not far from the bottom were the doors of the two large rooms which we have often

mentioned, and at the side of the stairs, the passage leading away towards the kitchen. Adrian hesitated at the foot of the steps which way he should turn ; but saying to himself, "We will have lights enough," he entered the panelled room where he had been sitting before he went to bed, and was lighting the two extinguished candles upon the table, when suddenly there was a louder and more distinct noise than before, coming from the back part of the premises.

"They have escaped me!" he thought ; but then came the noise of foot-falls mounting some steps, apparently so near, that Adrian fancied they must be upon the great staircase, and looked out. All was vacant and still there, however ; but the sound of steps ascending continued for a moment or two longer, and was then heard above. There seemed to be no great desire of conceal-

ment, either. The tread was heavy, and there were evidently several persons walking deliberately along.

“A fresh party!” said Adrian. “Their numbers make them impudent. They have the odds; but never mind!”

He paused for an instant in thought. But nothing had yet been heard of Ella: there was that sort of despairing feeling about his heart, which long uncertainty and the daily decay of hopes always generate. Life seemed to have lost its value. He cared not what became of him; and taking a light in one hand, with a pistol in the other, he walked straight on towards the kitchen.

As he approached, all was still; and he laid out his little scheme in his mind, to attack the men as they came down the narrow staircase, thinking that his pistols

would do for two, and that he should find some weapon, a cleaver, or a large knife, with which he might deal with the remainder.

Nevertheless, not to be without some precaution, he approached the kitchen door very quietly, and as it was ajar, saw that there was a light within. He pushed it gently open ; but it creaked vilely, and Adrian had just time to perceive a man standing in the kitchen, close to the foot of the stairs, in a listening attitude, when the stranger turned round, and he beheld the features of Sparhawk.

Without a moment's hesitation—without consideration, doubt, or pity—but as instinctively as if he had seen a tiger in his path, Adrian levelled his pistol, and fired. But the ball did not take full effect. It cut the pirate's cheek to the bone, and ran along the temple, but did no farther injury ; and

in an instant Sparhawk sprang upon his adversary with the leap of a tiger.

Adrian dropped the candle, and strove to reach the other pistol ; but the powerful grasp of the pirate, upon his throat and right arm, frustrated all his efforts ; and he too clutched his antagonist in a fierce and deathly struggle. At the same time, there were loud sounds above, shouting voices, and pistol shots ; and Sparhawk, with a fearful oath, muttered, even while he tugged with his opponent, “ I am betrayed ! but I’ll sell life dearly ! ”

Adrian was powerful, far taller than his adversary, and in boyhood practised in wrestling ; but Sparhawk’s compact strength was tremendous ; and, nearly matched in advantages, the conflict was very equal. For several minutes they reeled, they struggled, they swayed to and fro, with their

fierce and ghastly faces glaring into each other by the dim light of the lantern still burning on the table. Now they tried to reach their pistols; now each strove to throw the other down; now the fingers pressed tighter on the throat in their grasp; and all the while, Adrian felt the warm blood flowing from his enemy's face, and trickling on his hand.

There was a sound of running feet above: there was the rush of carriage wheels without: there was a loud knocking at the front door; but neither Adrian nor Sparhawk paid any heed. Life and death, vengeance and hate, were upon the cast of that moment; and still they struggled on direfully; each frustrating the other's efforts, and each nearly a match for his enemy, though Adrian thought, with a feeling of fierce

triumph, that he felt Sparhawk's vigour somewhat failing.

It was so ; the blood from the artery in the temple was pouring out too copiously to be without effect. Instead of driving Adrian back, he was driven back in turn—struck violently against a fixed dresser—his head dashed against the wall.

Suddenly the scene changed. There was bustle and confusion on all sides. Neither withdrew his eager eyes from the other's face ; but both became conscious that there were witnesses present ; and a woman's piercing shriek ran through the room.

“ Now,” cried Adrian, “ now !” as he found a momentary advantage ; and loosing his grasp from his enemy's throat, he flung his arms round him in an instant, lifted him from the floor, and with a tremendous effort

cast him headlong into the wide open fireplace.

A tremulous scream, like that of a wounded vulture—a deep groan—and Sparhawk lay motionless where he had fallen.

“ My husband ! my husband !” cried a sweet, clear voice ; and Ella’s arms were round Adrian’s neck.

For an instant he glared round in silence, upon her, upon Ruth, upon the old negress, Kitty, upon a tall old man, who stood with his arms folded upon his chest, behind him. The fierceness of the strife was still upon him, struggling with love and tenderness ; and all he could say was, “ Ella—my Ella !”

But there were feet hurrying down the kitchen stairs ; and in another moment Charles Selden ran in the room, with one of the officers behind him, each bearing about him evident signs of recent conflict.

“Have you some linen? have you some linen?” cried Charles Selden; and then, pausing suddenly, he exclaimed, “Good God!—What is all this?—Adrian—Ella—who is that lying there?”

“The murderer,” replied Adrian. “I have avenged my friend.”

“Well, we have got the rest of them,” cried Charles; “one of them dead, three of them living. But have you got some linen? One of our men is hurt.—Here, take this,” he continued, snatching up a napkin that lay on the shelf, and handing it to the officer. “Bind it tight round the arm, below the wound. I will be up directly; but first let me look at this fellow;” and approaching Sparhawk, he gazed for a moment at him as he lay perfectly motionless, and then turned him over on his face. He seemed to need no more than one glance

at the back of his head. "A tolerable blow," he said; "that will do! No need of taking any further care of him. Adrian, Adrian, take your wife away.—But are you hurt yourself?"

"No, no," replied Adrian, "nearly choked, but not hurt;" and without more words, he led his pale and beautiful Ella, with his arm thrown tenderly round her waist, to the dark panelled chamber where the calm lights were burning quietly just as he had left them.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Turn not thine eyes upon the backward view :
Let us look forward into sunny days.”

COLERIDGE.

IT is needless to trouble the reader with any further explanation of the events which had lately occurred. A very slight effort of the imagination will supply all deficiencies. One onward glance, and we have done.

It was about half an hour after the death of Sparhawk, and Adrian and Ella were seated together, somewhat recovered from the confusion of feeling and thought into

which recent events had thrown them. Charles Selden was also in the room. Ella had wept a good deal; but she was now calm, and was giving a brief explanation to her husband of her sudden return at that hour of the night. She had told him only that strange events had befallen her in Charleston, which she would relate afterwards, that she had never received any of the letters he had sent to her, and that during the last ten days she had been travelling incessantly.

“I would not delay a single moment, Adrian,” she said, rising, putting her arms round her husband’s neck, and leaning her head upon his bosom—“I would not delay a single moment, after my love to you, and my duty to you were reconciled, dearest. They are reconciled now, Adrian; for, by a strange discovery, I find that Adrian will have no

longer occasion to feel a moment's pain on account of his Ella's birth. I only value the blood to which I now find I belong, because it renders me more your equal, more fitted to be your wife—”

“ Not a word—not a word on that score, my Ella !” cried Adrian, pressing her fondly to his heart. “ All prejudices are gone, my love ; all clouds are swept away from my mind. No accidental circumstance can add to, or take away from, the joy of calling you mine. Nay more,—I call God to witness, that I would rather have my Ella as the fisherman's daughter, than the child of a peer or a prince.”

There was something inexpressibly sweet to Ella in that assurance ; but still the story of her birth had to be told, and though it is but doing justice to Adrian to say, that it was now no relief to him—for, like many

new converts, he had an enthusiasm in his new opinions—yet his sincere friend Charles Selden rejoiced, saying to himself, “There can never be even a passing shadow upon their happiness on this score any more should he even waver in his faith. On this point, at least, the clouds of the mind have passed away for ever.—May it be so with all of them !”

We see no reason why a tale should not end like a drama, with the principal characters all grouped together, and the after-fate of those in whom we are interested, left to such probabilities as imagination can discover or create.

Who can doubt that Adrian and Ella were happy ?

Who can doubt that Charles Selden remained their firm and well-loved friend, or that, when he married a prim little New

England wife—as unlike himself as all the infinite varieties of human nature would permit—she became attached to those to whom he was attached, felt half afraid of the high and mystical Adrian Brewerton, and looked up to Ella with a degree of veneration which New-Englanders do not often feel for any thing?

Who can doubt that when Mrs. Ashmore joined her two young cousins she found in them much to admire and love, much comfort in the present, much consolation for the past?

Who can doubt that Mr. Volney withered in joyless old age, with the finger of scorn and abhorrence pointed at him, the blight of shame upon his name, and the canker-worm of disappointed villainy in his heart?

Who can doubt that Ben Herring always met Adrian's readily extended hand with a cordial grasp ; or that Simon the half-breed found a peaceful nook by the side of a cheerful fire, and gazed with his great thoughtful and inquiring eyes upon the countenance of Davie the fool, looking upon him almost with as much reverence as a Mahomedan would have done.

Who can doubt any of these things, or a great many others ? Nobody ; and therefore we shall not enter into any further explanation on the subject ; and only say that, from that hour forward, all clouds were wafted away from Adrian's mind by the storm of passions and events which had assailed him. The sunshine of a strong faith, and a calm, reasoning trust succeeded, illuminating the world, and showing him

realities which had long lain hidden in darkness.

May it be so with all whose sky is obscured with mists and vapours likewise.

THE END.





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